

***HISTORY OF
FREEDOM MOVEMENT
in
GUNTUR DISTRICT
1921 - 47***

Dr. B. SESHAGIRI RAO

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History of Freedom Movement
in Guntur District
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To
My Parents

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P R E F A C E

A substantial portion of this work is the thesis submitted by me to the Andhra University, Waltair in 1976 for the doctoral degree. The reason why Guntur district is taken up for a case study for the growth of political consciousness is that the district had the reputation throughout South India as a centre of political leadership among other Telugu districts. With the emergence of Gandhi as the undisputed leader of the Indian Independence Movement after the Calcutta Special Congress held in September, 1920, the Guntur District was the epi-centre for political storms, which shook the very foundations of the British colonial administration. During the Non-Cooperation Movement the government officials faced so much of social ostracism that the District Collector remarked that he had seen 'Swaraj' established in the district. In the subsequent movements also like Salt Satyagraha, Simon Boycott Call, Quit India Movement etc., the district did not lag behind, and the government had to concentrate their military and para-military forces to rule the people against their will. This work contains all such incidents and in the last chapter - Review and conclusions - an attempt is made to show why the Guntur district was ahead of other Telugu districts in the national movement, and what castes and communities were in the fore-front of the movement.

Material for this work has been culled from innumerable sources such as official documents of the Andhra Pradesh State Archives (Central Record Office), Hyderabad; resolutions and documents of the Provincial and District Congress Committee; District Unit of the Communist Party of India; political and literary newspapers and periodicals and answers to the questionnaire

presented to the freedom fighters in the district. Secondary sources - books by scholars, Indian and foreign - were consulted for a general study of the Indian independence movement to evolve a thesis of the freedom movement in the Guntur district.

I express my greatest debt of gratitude to Dr. Y. Srirama Murty, Professor of History and Archaeology, Andhra University, Waltair, who initiated me into this area of research, and guided me with unflinching cooperation and advice throughout.

I express my sincere thanks to the authorities of Andhra Pradesh State Archives (Central Record Office), Saraswatiniketan (Vetapalem) and Saraswathi Library (Ongole) for permitting me to consult various documents, reports, news-papers, periodicals and books pertaining to this work. I owe my special thanks to the various freedom fighters, who, though in advanced age, gave me considerable time and took the trouble of answering my questionnaire. Their comments threw good light on the various issues raised in this work.

My grateful thanks are to my sister-in-law Miss. Vasantha Lakshmi Navuluri for preparing the type-script, and also to my wife Visalakshi, who, in spite of her domestic chores and tight schedule in the C S. R. Sarma College, Ongole as Lecturer, helped me a lot in the preparation of this book. I should also mention Mr. P. Gopala Krishna, Assistant Editor, "Zamin Ryot", Nellore for proof reading and Mr. T. Vanamali, printer of this work.

Last but not the least, I express my gratitude to the Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi but for whose generous publication grant this work might not have seen the light of the day.

B. SESHAGIRIRAO

Genesis and Growth of Political Consciousness In Guntur District

INTRODUCTION

Situated between 15°-8' and 10°-50' Northern Latitude and 70°-10' and 80°-55' Eastern Longitude and covering an area of 5,795 square miles Guntur district was formed in the year 1904 with nine taluqs-Guntur, Sattenapalli, Narasaraopet, Palnad, Vinukonda, Bapatla, Tenali, Repalle and Ongole. According to the census conducted in 1921 in the Madras presidency of which the Guntur district was then a part, the population of the district was 1.8 million. The district created in 1904 by the British Government continued twenty three years after independence. On February 1, 1970 the taluq of Ongole, Chirala Sub-taluq, Paruchur firka of Bapatla taluq, Martur and Kommalapad firkas of Narasaraopet taluq and Gurizepalli of Rompecharla firka also of Narasaraopet taluq were taken out of the Guntur district and with other contiguous parts of Nellore and Kurnool

districts the Prakasam district was carved out. So the Guntur district created in the year 1904 continued in its original form and extent till 1970.

Rich in agricultural crops like turmeric, sugar-cane, rice, tobacco, cotton and other staple crops and watered by the irrigation canals of Nagarjuna Sagar project and Krishna anicut, the Guntur District now to the Indian standards is not merely a surplus but a rich district. She is fast carving out a niche in the industrial map of India with cement factories at Mangalagiri and Macherla, jute mill at Guntur, spinning mill at Chirala, ginning mills and tobacco redrying factories at many places. Guntur boasts of highest number of colleges in the present State of Andhra Pradesh. ¹

This was a contrast to the condition of Guntur and its surrounding areas even in the first years of the second half of the 19th century, when people unable to discharge government dues were subjected to severe repressive measures, and Gajula Lakshmi Narasimha Chetty of Madras had to intercede with the government on behalf of the people. ² Prof. Robert Eric Frykenberg gives a vivid picture of Guntur during the company times: "The land was parched and its people destitute. The canals of Chola days had long been forgotten, and tanks were often dry. Famine and flood intermittently troubled the country with plague and cholera in their wake. As if this were not enough, occasional cyclones, tidal waves, and scourges of locusts would bring further devastation." ³

1. Statistical Atlas of the Guntur district: 1360 (fash) [Hyderabad: 1950-51]

2. Konda Venkatappayya: Sweeya Charitra. Hyderabad, 1966) (Telugu, p. 6.

3. Robert Eric Frykenberg: Guntur District 1783 - 1848. (Oxford, 1965), p. 2

However, introduction of commercial crops brought into existence a prosperous middle class in the Guntur district which, when freed from need and want, looked to social and political spheres to engage itself. Economic viability coupled with rapid strides made in education gave her political leadership, and Myron Weiner who did research on the party politics of the Guntur district concluded that "the district has a reputation throughout the South as a centre of leadership for all political parties".¹

Guntur district played a remarkable role in the nation's struggle for political and economic emancipation from the British imperialism. Some of her illustrious sons like Desa Bhakta Konda Venkatappayya, Andhra Ratna Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya and Andhra Kesari Tanguturi Prakasam, just to name a few, were all-India figures and names to conjure with for selfless service, tenacity of purpose, undaunted courage in the face of personal trial and tribulation and political sagacity of very high order. In India's long drawn struggle for national emancipation Guntur district was the epicentre of political storms that shook the very foundation of the British Raj.

What then was the genesis of this stupendous growth of political consciousness among the people of the district? What then were the factors that contributed to this?

There is a tendency among some modern scholars doing research on the Indian independence movement on

1. Myron Weiner: *Party Building in a New Nation* (Chicago, 1967) p. 126.

different planes-nation, province and locality-to pin-point that Gandhi's emergence on the political scene marks the phenomenal growth of national spirit, and that the movement began only with him. It is true that Gandhi gave shape, proper leadership and momentum to the national spirit, and that his mark on the freedom movement was indelible. But, Prof. M. Venkatarangaiya finds it logical to look at the freedom movement as a continuation of what had happened in the country during the rule of the British ¹ He quotes Carl Leiden and M. Schmitt: "Rather than a single dramatic incident, the birth of a Revolution may consist of a series of related events. For example, it is difficult to hold the proposition that the Declaration of Independence marked the birth of American Revolution. There were, after all Lexington and Concord; and other acts of violence and defiance of authority.....". ²

So also there were incidents in the Guntur district against the British myrmidons like the Kotappakonda riot that occurred on the Sivaratri festival of 1909 and many other acts of protest by the people against the British government much earlier than Gandhi's return to India from South Africa. For violent and non-violent activities against the alien rule and nationalism taking deep root there were influences which were constantly at work giving momentum to the national under-current that was slowly but steadily surfacing. Mention should be made of influences like western education, library movement, national literature, Vande Matharam movement, Home rule movement, early associations though by modern parlance were not political associations and the formation of the Guntur District Congress Committee.

1 Prof M. Venkatarangaiya: "Sociology of the Freedom Movement in Andhra-An official view" (Published in Itihas, Journal of the Andhra Pradesh Archives Itihas Vol. I p. 161.

2 Ibid

WESTERN EDUCATION

Guntur district now in 1976 boasts of eighteen degree colleges, law college, teacher training colleges, medical college and Nagarjuna University offering instruction in various disciplines, both sciences and humanities.¹ Nowhere else in Andhra Pradesh has there been such a concentration of educational institutions.

However, introduction of western education in Guntur district was the work of Lutheran and Baptist missionaries of America. Though the missionaries arrived in Guntur principally for the propagation of the Gospel, they did substantial work in the field of education. Before 1842 there was a school in the Guntur town, which was run under the patronage of collectors and other English residents of the town.² But real foundation for higher education in the district was laid with the arrival of Rev. C. F. Heyer of the Pennsylvania Synod Society. His life and achievements remind one of David Livingstone and Dr. Albert Schweitzer. Dr. C. H. Swavely for many years Principal and Bursar of the Andhra Christian College³ gives a vivid description of the arrival of C. F. Heyer in Guntur. "On October 15, 1841, Father Heyer sailed from Boston, Mass., and landed at Tuticorn on March 23, 1842... Travelling by Palakeen to Palamcotta, Tinnevely, Madura, Trichinopoly and Tranquebar, he arrived at Madras on April 16, 1842. After a month of Telugu language study, he started north on May 19th and arrived at Nellore on May 23rd. From Nellore the Rev. Stephen Van Husen of the American Baptist Mission accompanied him in seeking a suitable location to carry on his work. They travelled to

1. Unclassified Andhra University records.

2. Rev. C. H. Swavely: The Lutheran Enterprise in India.
(Place of Publication not mentioned, 1952), P.3.

3. Andhra Christian College Annual Calendar 1973-74
[Guntur, 1973], pp. 4, 5.

Ongole, and later to Guntur, arriving on July 31, 1842. At Guntur they were given a very cordial welcome by H. Stokes Esq, the District Collector. Father Heyer decided to begin his work at once".¹ Heyer organised schools in Kottapet (Guntur), Prattipadu and Nallapadu, In November 1842 he started the first girls school in Guntur. The number of schools at the end of Father Heyer's first year had risen to seven with ten teachers and one hundred and eighty pupils.² When Heyer left India in 1871 the number of pupils in the Guntur area rose to four hundred.³

Dr. and Mrs. LL Uhl arrived in Guntur on March 26, 1873 and for fifty years did good work in the field of education. In 1885 he raised eighteen thousand American dollars for the buildings of educational institutions.⁴

The first college in Guntur was also the work of missionaries. In September 1885 The American Evangelical Lutheran Mission college, rechristened Andhra Christian College in January 1928, was started with Dr. L. C. Wolf as the Principal.

This was affiliated to the Madras University till April 1926 when the Andhra University Act came into force.⁵ The college had a series of efficient Principals, and of them mention should be made of Rev. J. Roy Strock (1919-1922, 1927-33, 1936-39) and Dr. H. F. Sipes (1923-27, 1933-36, 1941-43)⁶ during whose tenure national movement in Guntur took a fast swing forward.

The American Baptist Mission also did good work in the promotion of western education in the district. The

1. C. H. Swavely: Op. cit. pp. 33, 34.

2. Ibid

3. Ibid. P, 34

4. Ibid

5. Unclassified Andhra Christian College [Guntur] records.

6. Ibid

A. B. M. School, Ongole, was started in 1880 by Dr. J. E. Clough. Between 1894-1908 this institution enjoyed the status of an Intermediate College, when colleges in the Madras presidency were few and far between.¹ When female education was a far-cry in Ongole till 1867, Dr. and Mrs. Clough filled the void by starting a girls' school that year. In 1892 a lower grade training school was also started for girls by the Baptist missionaries. These two institutions that promoted education among the girls of Ongole and its surrounding areas had the services of devoted missionaries like Miss. Berth Evans (1911-15), Miss. Susan Roberts (1916-35) and Miss. Helen L. Baillie (1930-53).²

Thus, these Lutheran and Baptist Missions established schools and colleges in Guntur district on western lines. Soon the government stepped in, and they multiplied. By the end of 1913 there were seventeen hundred and seventy schools attended by sixty thousand two hundred and thirty four students.³ These centres of learning were responsible for the widening of intellectual and political horizons of the peoples of the district. Most of the leading lights of the freedom movement of the district were the products of these institutions.

Konda Venkafappayya speaks extollingly of these missionary institutions.⁴ In these English educational

1. Memorandum presented to Mr. Malte Lindh, Secretary, International Committee of the Young Peoples' Union of the Baptist Union of Sweden on the occasion of his visit to the A. B. M. Junior College Ongole on 26-7-'71 by the Principal & staff of the A. B. M. Junior College Ongole. (Ongole, 1971)
2. Ongole Girls' School Anniversaries (Ongole, 1957), pp. 1, 2.
3. 1914 June 4, 5 tedula Ongole nandu Jarigina 23 va Gunturu Mandala Sabha yandu Sriyuta Vinjamuri Bhavanacharyulu garu Agrasanadhipatyopanyasamu (place of publication and year not mentioned (Telugu), P. 6. Hereafter this is referred to as Vinjamuri Bhavanacharyulu's Presidential Address in the Guntur District Conference held at Ongole on June 4th and 5th, 1914.)
4. Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit. 24,25

institutions the student came to grips with a wide range of subjects like Politics and Economics. They learnt about serfdom, slavery, American war of Independence, Italian Unification Movement and their own plight under the alien rule. Prof. N. G. Ranga writes that as a student of Ponnur High School he had the opportunity to read "Plutarch's Lives," a biography of Benjamin Franklin. "I could see how the American Negroes were liberated from their slavery and began to dream of the liberation of our Panchamas-later to be known as Harijans-from untouchability".¹ It was also as a student of F. A. class in the A. E. L. M. College, Guntur that N. V. L. Narasimha Rao, Chairman of the Guntur Municipality during 1922-30, 1933-34² and a leading participant in the freedom struggle in the Guntur district since non-cooperation days came under the influence of the social reform movement launched by Kandukuri Veeresalingam and Unnava Lakshminarayana.³ The heated discussions that went on between the social reformers and the orthodox sections created not a little interest in the young minds like those of N. V. L. Narasimha Rao. Some of the leading participants in the freedom movement of the Guntur district were also the products of the western universities.

N. V. L. Narasimha Rao and Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya took M. A. (Hons) degrees from the Edinburgh University,⁴ Unnava Lakshminarayana his Barrister's degree from the Dublin University,⁵ Tanguturi Prakasam his Barrister's degree from the Gray's Inn of the Council of Legal Education, London⁶ and Prof. N. G. Ranga B. Litt

1. N. G. Ranga : Fight for Freedom (New Delhi, 1968), P. 57

2. Daruvuri Veerayya (Editor): Guntur Mandala Sarvaswamu (Guntur, 1964) (Telugu), P. 153

3. Unclassified and unpublished personal papers of N. V. L. Narasimharao, hereafter referred to as personal papers of N. V. L. Narasimharao.

4. Personal papers of N. V. L. Narasimharao.

5. Kanuparthi Varalakshamma: Unnava Dampathalu (Srimannarayanapuram, Krishna district, 1963) (Telugu), p. 25.

6. T. Prakasam: Na Jeevitha Yatra (Madras, 1972) (Telugu), P. 93.

(Economics) from the Oxford University.¹

Their stay in the west was their greatest eye-opener. N. V. L. Narasimha Rao was impressed with the love of freedom of the Scots. The Irish war of Independence kindled much enthusiasm in his young student heart. The elections for the Rectorship of the Edinburgh University and the free air which the people were breathing inculcated in him a passionate yearning for the liberation of his own mother-land.² Writing about England and Western Europe, Prof. N. G. Ranga says, "We were breathing and living in the almost heavenly atmosphere of complete freedom and social equality of English and European life. We owed a special duty to our masses to help them to rise to such a status".³ The creation of the Irish Free State proved to be a ray of hope for him. As a student at Oxford, Ranga read much about French and American Revolutions and loved Thomas Paine and Jefferson, the philosophers of the Declaration of American Independence. "I was under the spell of the writings of Shelly, H. G. Wells, William Morris and Blotchford. So, I decided to become a follower of Mahatma Gandhi to work for national freedom".⁴

The spread of western education was limited and confined only to a few. There were also inherent defects in the system. Bipin Chandra, Amales Tripathi and Barun De list some of them like complete neglect of modern technical education, emphasis on English as the medium of instruction in place of Indian languages which created a wide linguistic and cultural gulf between the educated and the masses, extremely low level of education etc.⁵

1. N. G. Ranga: Op. cit. P. 93

2. Personnal papers of N. V. L. Narasimharao.

3. N. G. Ranga: Op. cit. p. 79.

4. Ibid. P. 113

5. Bipin Chandra, Amales Tripathi, Barun De Freedom Struggle (New Delhi, 1972) pp. 26, 27.

But in spite of these defects western education brought new ideas to the young minds. With the modern knowledge, they got, they were able to analyse and criticise the imperialist and exploitative character of the British rule, and organise an anti-imperialist political movement. Western education also raised in the people revulsion against glaring social injustices inextricably ingrained in the Indian caste-system. But for his western education it is difficult to imagine whether Tripuraneni Ramaswami Chowdary would have led the 'Suddhi' movement or written "Vivaha Vidhi", wherein he denounced the diabolical caste-system or championed the cause of Harijans in Guntur district in general and Tenali taluq in particular.¹ Thus the English educated elite, though numerically not very strong, exerted considerable influence in giving a shape and form to New India that was slowly emerging.²

As now, so in the past, the student-community supplied to the leadership much raw and inflammable material for agitation. During the Non-cooperation Movement, Salt Satyagraha and Quit India Movement, the role of the students in the district was really spectacular. The Andhra Christian College, being the premier educational centre in the district, naturally took a leading role. It is already pointed out that American missionaries were the founders of the college and the two important principals of the college were J. Roy Strock and Dr. H. H. Sipes. Being Americans they knew the value of freedom, and how hard won their liberty was. They came from the land of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Rev. C. H. Swavely of the Andhra Christian College, Guntur regrets that due to Civil War in America the missionaries could not bring more funds for their missionary and

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1. Tapi Dharmarao's article "Tripuraneni Ramaswami Chowdary" in Vignana Sarvaswamu, Vol. III (Madras, 1959) (Telugu) pp. 1031, 1032.
 2. R. C. Majumdar: History of Freedom Movement in India, Vol I, (Calcutta 1963), p. 290.

educational activity.¹ Principal Strock and Principal Sipes were not averse to the national aspirations of the Indians. T. Sivasankara Swamy, G. V. Punnamayya Sastry and S. V. L. Narasimham, when interviewed, said without hesitation that Rev. Strock and Dr. Sipes had sympathies for the Indian national movement.²

LIBRARY MOVEMENT

Libraries are disseminating centres of knowledge. This was more so in a rural country like India, where educational institutions were limited. The Guntur district libraries, besides disseminating knowledge, set as their goal deepening national spirit of the people and buttressing their patriotic sentiment against the foreign yoke. Delivering the presidential address in the Third Andhra Desa Library Congress held in Nellore on May 12, 1916, in which Guntur district delegates enthusiastically took part,³ Kasinadhuni Nageswararao asserted that libraries serve their purpose only when they inculcate spirit of enquiry in the people.⁴ Though in 1921 public figures of the Guntur district concentrated their energies more on the freedom struggle and less on other activities, the library movement still created in the people love for selfless sacrifice for the country and carried the gospel of freedom to the four corners of the district.⁵ Saranu Ramaswamy Chowdary and Adusumalli Srinivasarao, both in the thick of the district library movement in the pre-independence period, say that the first libraries in An-

1. C. H. Swavely: Op cit. p. 36.

2. Signed statements of T Sivasankara swamy, G. V. Punnamayya Sastry and S. V. L. Narasimham.

3. Andhra Desa Grandhalaya Charitra (published in the name of Ayyanki Venkata Ramanayya, Secretary- Andhra Desa Grandha Bhandagara Sangham; Author's name not mentioned, (Bezwada, 1916) (Telugu)p. 1

4. Ibid p. 23

5. V. V. Sresty. Gunturu Mandala Grandhalaya Charitra 1931-32 (Guntur, year of publication not mentioned) (Telugu), p. 2.

dhra in the modern times were those of the Guntur district.¹ The library started in Guntur town in 1882 in Sri Krishna Theosophical Lodge and the C. V. N. Reading Room established in Ongole in 1891 appear to be the earliest reading centres.² The library movement, thus having a humble beginning, gained momentum in the first quarter of the twentieth century. By 1914 there were thirty five libraries in the district, and in 1916 the Guntur Mandala Grandhalaya Sangham was started under the leadership of Tadanki Venkayya.³ In 1920 the Sangham held its meeting under the chairmanship of the eminent patriot Unnava Lakshminarayana.

By 1938 the Gunturu Mandala Grandhalaya Sangham could boast of one hundred and seventy six libraries scattered in the urban and rural areas of the district.⁴

Some of the libraries in the district were named after the national leaders viz. Tilak Jatheeya Grandha Nilayam, Chinapalem (Tenali taluq), Patel Pathana Mandiram, Godavarru (Tenali taluq), Dadabhai Noaraji Pustaka Bhandagaramu, Tsundur (Tenali taluq), Nehru Grandhalayam, Gudavalli (Repalli taluq), Mahatma Gandhi Vysya Grandhalayam, Bhattiprolu (Repalle taluq), Andhra Ratna Grandhalayam, Peturu (Repalle taluq), Desodharaka Grandhalayam, Medikonduru (Sattenpalli taluq), etc.⁵ The founders of these libraries might have attempted to imbibe something of the spirit of the national leaders in whose names these libraries were founded. The libraries were the centres of discussion and debate. They were definitely the symbols of national resurgence.

1. "Gunturu Mandalamu lo Grandhalayodyamamu-Grandhala Charitra". Article of Saranu Ramaswamy Chowdary and Adusumalli Srinivasarao in Gunturu Mandala Sarvaswamu, p. 505,

4, Ibid p. 506

3. Ibid

4. Gunturu Mandala Grandhalaya Charitra (Published by the Gunturu Mandala Grandhalaya Sangham, authors name not mentioned. Gunturu, 1938) p. 50

5. Ibid, pp. 4, 9, 15, 17 21, 25, 37.

The Guntur Pattana Grandhalaya Sangham had a novel scheme of distributing among the sick and the wounded books pertaining to cleanliness, literacy, nationalism etc. This scheme was inaugurated on November 22, 1936. Capt. Hopper of the Government Head-quarters hospital and Buddhiraju Ramachandra Rao played a key-role in this novel enterprise.¹

Seva Srama Vani Mandiram, Peddapalem of Tenali taluq founded in 1919 by Malempati Rangayya, Putumbaka Sreeramulu and Pathuri Nagabhushanam, who were enthusiastic non-cooperators had magic lantern and slides and educated the villagers in various political problems.² Patel Pathana Mandiram, Godavarru (Tenali taluq) founded in 1926 had also magic lantern and slides.³ Their educative value on villagers cannot be under-estimated.

The technique of *satyagraha* which Gandhii initiated with success in South Africa formed the dominant element in India's struggle for freedom since 1919. There was general awakening of the masses to their political rights and privileges from that year. *The Gunturu Mandala Grandhalaya Sangham* contributed its mite to this great awakening. In 1920 the *Sangham* published a series of pamphlets touching changes in administrative set-up, vote-voter, taxation and how it should be paid, the glory of Ancient India, Acts and how they were enacted, national awakening, coins-currency, untouchability, non-co-operation etc. These pamphlets were distributed not only in the district but also in far-off places like Burma and received much appreciation. Kolavennu Ramakoteswararao evinced much interest in their publication as an integral part of the district library movement. Tanguturi Prakasam,

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1. *Gunturu Mandala Grandhalaya Sanghamu-30-7-1938 nundi 10-8-1940 varaku - Karyadarsi Kasturi Kutumba Rao Nivedika* (Kanagala, 1940) (Telugu). p. 15
 2. *Gunturu Mandala Grandhalaya Charitra* (Published by the Guntur Mandala Grandhalaya Sangham, Author's name not mentioned. Guntur, 1938) (Telugu) p. 14
 3. Ibid, p. 17.

Jagarlamudi Kuppuswami Choudary, Bellamkonda Raghavarao and N. V. L. Narasimharao financed this enterprise. Impressive work of this kind might have prompted N. G. Ranga, who undertook an extensive tour of Britain and greater part of the Continent in 1922 to assert, "The British movement for rural libraries was only a beginning, whereas the Indian rural library movement had already passed its adolescence"²

The impact of the libraries in the district on the up and coming leaders was overwhelming. 1910 to 1916 was the village library phase of N. G. Ranga's life. Sitting in the library of his village, Ponnur, he familiarised himself with the teachings of Veeresalingam and Brahmo Samajists, evils of untouchability and caste-system, traditional taboos and the political teachings of Lok Manya Tilak and B. C. Pal, and ultimately introduced himself to the national movement for freedom.³

The library movement in the Guntur district contributed not a little in furthering the national consciousness among the people. It enlivened rural life, and educated politically the not-so-much educated rural youth, who had hitherto been only hewers of wood and tillers of soil.

NATIONAL LITERATURE

History gives numerous examples, where a genuine national reawakening is symbolised in literature, which in its turn sustains and speeds up the national movement so that one reacts upon the other.⁴ For the out-break of

1. "Gunturu Mandalamu lo Grandhalaadyamamu-Grandhalaya Charitra." Article of Saranu Ramaswamy Choudary and Adusumalli Srinivasa Rao in Gunturu Mandala Sarvaswainu, p. 507.

2. N. G. Ranga : Op. cit. p. 98.

3. Ibid' p. 17

4. R. C. Majumdar : Op. cit. Vol, II (Calcutta, 1963), p. 148

the French Revolution the writings of Rousseau, Voltaire and Montesquieu and for the Great October Socialist Revolution of Soviet Russia the writings of Marx and Engels Gorki and Lenin had tremendous effect.

The cause of nationalism in India was also greatly furthered by the emergence of national literature. Bengal in this regard showed the way. Significant contribution in the field of national literature was made in Bengal by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the author of *Ananda Mutt* which contains the national hymn *Vande Mataram*,, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, regarded as the Father of Modern Bengali poetry, Dinabandhu Mitra whose *Nila Darpan* was a scathing satire on the indigo-planters of Bengal, and the great poet Ravindranath Tagore.

The influence of patriotic fervour animating Bengal literature was not confined to the province of Bengal alone. It galvanised the youth from Karachi to Calcutta and from Lahore to Madras. Bankim Chandra's hymn *Vande Mataram* had been the national anthem of India upto 1947. During the long and arduous struggle for freedom from 1905 to 1947 *Vande Mataram* was the rallying cry of the patriotic sons of India, and thousands of them succumbed to the *lathi* blow of the British police or mounted the scaffold with *Vande Mataram* on their lips.¹ On February 18, 1909, during *Mahasivaratri* festival there was a serious confrontation between the police and the festival revellers in Kotappakonda in Guntur district² when the police beat up the people on a flimsy ground, there was wholesale rioting and the air rent with the slogan *Vande Mataram*.³ Under the leadership of one Chinnappa Reddy, whom the government tried and hanged

1. R. C. Majumdar : Op. cit. Vol. I p 341.

2. M. Venkatarangaiyya : The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra) Vol II (Hydrabad, 1969), p. 59.

3. Ayyadevara Kaleswararao : Na Jeevitha Katha, Navyandhramu (Vijayawada, 1959)(Telugu), pp. 112, 113:

later, the festival revellers that day bared their breasts against the government bullets with full throated cries of *Vande Mataram*.¹

Other non-Telugu nationalist literature that inspired the district people appear to be the writings of Vivekananda and Rama Tirtha. Both of them condemned in their writings all that was drossy in the Hindu religion. N. G. Ranga was happy that he could find in their writings "an explanation for all the confusing and contradictory social atmosphere with which I had been surrounded almost to suffocation".² Vivekananda and Rama Tirtha created in him a revulsion against idol-worship, casteism and sacrificial ceremonies.³ As R. C. Majumdar points out, "The revolt of the mind against the tyranny of dogmas and traditional authorities, beliefs and customs is the first requisite for freedom of thought and conscience which lies at the root of progress in social, religious and political spheres of life".⁴

According to Nidadavolu Venkatarao, Vande Mataram movement marked the beginning of national literature in Telugu.⁵ In 1907 Bipin Chandra Pal undertook a tour of the Andhra country, and as a part of it stayed in Rajahmundry from April 19th to 24th. Chilakamarthi Lakshminarasimham during the last meeting of Pal at Rajahmundry composed a verse in Telugu and read it to the audience:

India is a gentle milch- cow
And the starved calves are Indians
The subtle cowherds muzzle them
To snatch the entire store of milk†

1. Ibid.

2. N. G. Ranga ; Op. cit, p. 30

3. Ibid

4. R. C. Majumdar ; Op. cit. Vol. - I' pp. 290, 291

5. N. Venkatarao's article "Adhunika Yugamu-Gandhi Sahityamu" in *Andhra Patrika* (Vijayawada) Annual Number 1973-'74, p. 9.

† M. Venkatarangaiya quotes the translation of Amarendra.

The verse subsequently became popular throughout Andhra and was inscribed on walls in public places¹ The national literature gained momentum with the advent of Gandhi on the national scene and touched all branches of Telugu literature-poetry, novel, drama etc. Mudali Nagabhushana Sarma who made a study of Gandhi's influence on Telugu literature enumerates the titles of eight hundred poems, novels and dramas.² Some of the poems he cites were on the lips of practically all Telugu people during the national movement. Of them mention should be made of Garimella Satyanarayana's "*Makoddu e Tella dora tanam*" (We do not want this whiteman's rule). Nidudavolu Venkatarao says that between 1921-23 everyone in the Andhra country hummed this tune.³ Daruvuri Veerayya writes how as a young man he was inspired and jumped into 1941 Individual Satyagraha Movement, when Pathuri Appayya Sastry went about the streets of Sattenapalli singing this poem.⁴

Damaraju Pundarikakshudu, Unnava Lakshminarayana and Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya have a special place in national literature, vis-a-vis Guntur district. They belong to the district, and especially the last two, besides being first ranking political figures of the district, were also writers of eminence. They ably used their pen to rouse national consciousness, and point out the glaring social and economic injustices.

Damaraju Pundarikakshudu wrote simple poems portraying the Chirala and Palnad people's struggle agai-

1. M. Venkatarangaiya : Op. cit. Vol-II, pp. 18, 19.

2. Mudali Nagabhushana Sarma ; Telugu Sahityamu : Gandhiji Prabhavam (Hyderabad, 1970) (Telugu)

3. N Venkatarao's article "Adhunika Yugamu -Gandhi Sahityamu" in Andhra Patrika (Vijayawada) Annual Number 1973-'74, p. 17.

4. Daruvuri Veerayya's article "Nenu na Jeevitam" in Gunturu Mandala Sarvaswamu p. 338

against the British government during the non-cooperation days.¹ He wrote plays in Telugu like *Swarajya Sopanam*, *Gandhi Vijayamu*, *Panchala Prabhavam*, *Swarajya Radham*, etc. These were enacted by *Tilak Nataka Samajamu* formed in Guntur in 1921. The actors played the roles of Gandhi, Lajpat Rai, Malaviya and Ali Brothers† and inspired vast audiences. Sometimes the atrocities committed by the martial law administration in the Punjab were the themes of the plays of Pundarikakshudu, and when they were enacted, the people used to go home fully convinced that in the ejection of the British from India alone lay their salvation. The authorities, therefore, created much trouble to Pundarikakshudu and the actors of the *Tilak Nataka Samajamu*. Before one play was proscribed by the authorities another was forthcoming from the pen of Pundarikakshudu. He used the pen as his sword, and that was why he came widely to be known as the Andhra national poet.² The plays and poems of Pundarikakshudu produced many patriots in the district.³

Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya composed poems, recited them at various meetings held in Guntur and inspired the people.⁴

Unnava Lakshminarayana during his internment in jail for his role in the Palnad anti-forest law campaign during the non-cooperation movement wrote *Malapalli*.⁵ In this great novel Lakshminarayana brought to light how the toiling masses were subjected to very cruel

1. Damaraju Pundarikakshudu : Gunturu Goppa (Guntur, 1921) (Telugu), pp. 9 to 24.

† Mohammad Ali and Shoukat Ali.

2. Mandala Veerabhadra Rao : Desabhakta Jeevita Charitra (Machilipatnam, 1966) [Telugu], pp. 68, 69.

3. Daruvuri Veerayya's article "Nenu na Jeevitam" in Gunturu Mandala Sarvaswamu- p. 339.

4. Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya : Chatuvulu (Bezwada, year of publication not mentioned) (Telugu), pp. 25, 28.

5. Kanuparthi Varalakshamma : *Op. cit.* p. 34.

exploitation. Kambhampati Satyanarayana vehemently asserts that October Revolution of Russia had its profound impact on Lakshminarayana, when he wrote *Malapalli*.¹ It is difficult to accept this assertion, as Lakshminarayana wrote much that was opposed to Marxism in *Malapalli*. Still as Kasinadhuni Nageswara Rao in his foreword to *Malapalli* says: "It is a peerless work" and "Unnava Lakshminarayana's attempt to reconstruct life on a new rational basis" is most commendable.²

The press, especially Telugu press, ably supplemented national literature in contributing to the growth of political consciousness among the people of Guntur district. Most of the newspapers "were crusaders against the foreign domination of the country. It was their mission to educate the people politically, help them to assimilate progressive ideas, and carry to them the doctrines of the great political thinkers of the west. Topics like liberty, democracy, self-government and nationalism were discussed and examined in their columns. In the next place it was their constant effort to expose the misdeeds of the government and subject its wrong policies to merciless criticism. They made the people conscious of their rights and freedoms, and fearlessly advocated popular causes."³ That is why the press has been glorified everywhere as the Fourth Estate.

Among the journals that made impact on the district were *The Hindu* (Madras), *Andhra Patrika* (Madras) and *Krishna Patrika* (Machilipatnam). The people who put themselves in tune with the national happenings through their assiduous study of the national its newspapers

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1. Kambhampati Satyanarayana : *Artha Satabda Kalamu lo Andhrula Paina Octobaru Viplava Prabhavam* (Madras, 1970) (Telugu), p. 91.
 2. Unnava Lakshminarayana : *Malapalli* (Sangha Vijayam) (Madras, 1962), p. viii (Telugu)
 3. J. P. Suda ; *Indian National Movement* (Meerut, 1973-74), p. 73.

followed with rising emotions the inspiring activities of the national leaders. N. G. Ranga then a young man of Ponnur trying to understand nuances of politics writes that the editorials of the press "emboldened us, through their courageous espousal of India's cause, and their daring made us all to think, talk and write openly and bravely against the British regime".¹

The government in Fort St. George did not look kindly at the news-papers. *The Annual Report of Telugu News-papers and Periodicals for the year 1921-'22'*² gives an idea of how much displeasure and anger *Andhra Patrika* and *Krishna Patrika* created in the government. The report says, "the Andhra Patrika of Madras, a comprehensive and well conducted daily, and Krishna Patrika took the lead as in preceding two years in the inculcation of the principles of N. C. O. Movement The extensive circulation of these papers in the Telugu districts and the considerable following, which they have secured for their dangerous cause, have contributed not a little to the phenomenal spread of very strong spirit of dissatisfaction and hatred in them towards the present system of government in the land. They were the recouitable champions of Civil Disobedience as the last and the most necessary step in their struggle for independence".

The same report speaks about some of the papers published from Guntur. *Gunturu Patrika* was the foremost among them. Its editor "has given much trouble to the government in Guntur and Palnad". The paper "professed to abide by the Congress and further the spread of the non-cooperation" in the district. The *Swatantra* also of Guntur was "extremely severe in its criticism of the acts of the government. It often placed before its readers extracts from the objectionable speeches and writings of

1. N. G. Ranga ; Op. cit. p 20

2. Andhra Pradesh State Archives Document Number 621.

C. F. Andrews and others and had its own share in inciting hatred and contempt among the people against the government''.

It should not be supposed that the press was useful only for the educated of the Guntur district. G. V. Pun-nayya Sastry says, ''Some times the educated would read out the papers to the uneducated, and thus all important news was carried to the masses''¹, and this method followed by the enthusiastic educated young men engendered in the people of the Guntur district considerable national spirit and political awakening.

VANDE MATARAM MOVEMENT

Close on the heels of the formation of the Guntur district in 1904, the tragedy of the dismemberment of Bengal took place in the year 1905, which left ''a profound and far-reaching influence on the public life of Bengal and the future of the country''² As Tara Chand remarks, ''Curzon's utter contempt for Indian sentiment and mischievous measures to disrupt the progress of the national movement provided the match to the magazine which was filled up with powder''.³ The partition of Bengal acted as a catalytic agent which accelerated the process of anti-British sentiment. The people everywhere bestirred themselves and though the movement in the South ''was not as vigorous as in Northern and Western India ''it effected'' almost all the districts'' even in the South.⁴ And to quote Prof. S. Gopal, ''Curzon's partition of Bengal gave the unwitting initiative to events of

1. Signed statement of G. V. Punnayya Sastry.

2. Sir Surendranath Banerjea ; A Nation in making (Oxford, 1963), p. 170.

3. Tara Chand ; History of the Freedom movement in India Vol-III [New Delhi] 1972. p. 325.

4. Ibid. p 324

magnitude, and returned many years later to port with the cargo of freedom".¹

At a public meeting held at Ongole on 13th July, 1907 Mittadoddi Venkata Subbarau, Pleader, Ongole mounted scathing criticism against the Bengal partition. He called it "the standing monument of the administrative incapacity the construction of which is entirely due to the architectural skill of Lord Curzon and Mr. Brodrick".² In the same meeting he vehemently lodged his strong protest against the repression let loose by the government in the form of "deportations and prosecutions in the Punjab, prosecutions and persecutions in Bengal, punitive police and quartering of troops in Madras, and stultifying students all over India". Especially, the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai irritated him. Every hook and corner of the Guntur district was concerned with the way the government was treating the national leaders and the rising tide of nationalism. Mittadoddi Venkata Subbarau asks, "Gentlemen, whoever dreamt of shouting 'Lala Lajpat Rai ki jai, by masses in the village of Kottapatnam† of our taluq (Ongole). I know it is a most backward place of all backward places. Who is responsible for all this stir....? The stir is something like the growling and rumbling noises of an earthquake!!"³

The alien administration created such a revulsion in the people that Kotu Jayarami Reddi, a native of Chima-

1. S. Gopal : British policy in India, 1858-1905 [Cambridge, 1965] p. 298.

2. Mittadoddi Venkata Subbarau : The present political situation in India. An address delivered by Mittadoddi Venkata Subbarau, Second Grade Pleader, Ongole Guntur District, Madras Presidency at a public meeting held at Ongole on 13th July, 1907. (Place of publication not mentioned. 1907), p. 11.

† Kothapatnam is a sea-side village about twelve miles east of Ongole.

3. Ibid, p. 22.

kurthi in Ongole taluq, despised everything British, and began to don *Khaddar* ever-since.¹

The people of the district started putting on a new political air. More than that, a fearless spirit was overtaking them. It was at this juncture that Bipin Chandra Pal, one of the national trinity - Lal, Bal and Pal † toured Andhra in April 1907. By that time, Pal's name was known throughout Andhra. As a part of his tour, Pal visited Kakinada,² Rajahmundry,³ Bezawada*⁴ and Guntur.⁵ Some students headed by Darsi Chenchayya and Nallamalli Varadarajam tried to get Pal to Ongole, but Pal having prearranged lecture-programme in Madras could not stop at Ongole.⁶

Bipin Chandra Pal was a fiery speaker, and he inculcated in the youth a burning faith in '*Swadeshi*' and a Passionate yearning for liberty. His phillippics against the alien rule received the dithyrambic approval in all quarters. More important, he drew the students to his cause like a magnet. The result was electrifying. The students in Guntur began attending classes with the full-throated cries of '*Vande Mataram*'. Though this was nothing but a salutation to motherland, it sent a chill in the spine of whitemen.⁷

Pal's visit to Rajahmundry produced more far-reaching results. There was a serious confrontation between Mark Hunter, Principal of the Government Arts

1. Ramachandruni Venkatappa's article "Ongolu Taluka lo Bahumukha Jateeya Chaitanyamu" in Gudlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurti Sanchika. (Ongole, 1972) (Telugu) p. 104.

† Lal, Bal, Pal stand for Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak Bipin Chandra Pal.

2. The Hindu (Madras) dated April 20, 1907.

3. The Hindu dated April 22, 23, 24, 25, 1907.

4. The Hindu dated April 29, May 3 and 11, 1907.

* Bezawada is now called as Vijayawada

5. Personal papers of N. V. L. Narasimharao.

6. Darsi Chanchayya : Nenu Na Desam. (Vijayawada, 1967) (Telugu), p. 42.

7. Personal papers of N. V. L. Narasimharao.

students headed by Gadicherla Harisarvothama Rao. In spite of repeated instructions to the contrary the students persisted attending classes wearing *Vande Mataram* badges.¹ The government thereupon issued G. O. No. 864 (Public) dated November 16, 1907 expelling one hundred and ten students from the Rajahmundry Government College.² Among them were three from the Guntur district. They sought admission to the Government Arts College, Rajahmundry, as it was one of the nearest colleges to the district people seeking degree courses.

The student incidents of Rajahmundry sent ripples round Andhra, and in a public meeting held at Ongole on July 13, 1907 Mittadoddi Venkata Subbarau condemned the action of Mark Hunter and the Madras Government rusticating many students. He protested: "I can understand the rustication of a student or two, but the rustication of almost all the students of a college - a first grade college like the one under consideration - no sensible man can for a moment understand. This is unique in the History of Universities. Why not abolish the college? Mr. Hunter could be provided anywhere : what blunder is this? Statesmanship seems to have left, if there was any, all the English politicians of the present day"

1: T. T. Logan, Acting Director of Public Instruction to the Secretary to Government (Education), Fort St. George, Madras, dated May 6, 1907. (Andhra Pradesh State Archives, Hyderabad History of the Freedom Struggle Section. The letters pertaining to the freedom movement do not contain any serial number of the State Archives. They are arranged in the files date-wise in the History of the Freedom Struggle Section. The source of such letters is hereafter referred to as A. P. State Archives H. F. S. Section)

2. Government Order Number 864 (Public), Government of Madras, Fort St. George Madras dated November, 16 1907. (Andhra Pradesh State Archives, Hyderabad History of the Freedom Struggle Section. The Government Orders pertaining to the freedom movement do not contain any serial number of the State Archives. They are arranged in the files date-wise in the History of the Freedom Struggle Section. The source of such Government Orders is hereafter referred to as A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

Bahadurism is rampant. How far this *Bahadurism* succeeds time alone should decide. I hope the time will not be longer."¹

More than any thing, the Rajahmundry incident of 1907 unleashed a new force in the national movement in the Andhra districts-the force of the student-community-destined to play a vital role with far-reaching consequences in the subsequent stages of the country's fight for freedom like Triple Boycott, Simon Commission Boycott, Salt Satyagraha, Quit India Movement etc.

In the wake of *Vande Mataram* movement an event of political importance occurred in the Guntur district - the Kotappakonda riot of 1909.

Kotappakonda is a bare hillock. It is in the Narsaraopet taluq of Guntur district. On the top of the hillock there is a shrine of Siva.[†] It has been customary to hold a car-festival every year on the *Mahasivaratri*^{††} Day. Manufacturers would bring their wares, and ryots their cattle, especially their bulls for exhibition. K. N. Kesari, who vividly describes the enthusiasm that pervades the festival in his autobiography, calls it a national fair.²

As usual pilgrims assembled at Kotappakonda for the *Mahasivaratri* festival in 1909. That year there were unusually large crowds which were far beyond the expectations of the police, as a result of which police arrangements broke down. The police were excessively severe in con-

1. Mittadoddi Venkata Subbarau : The present political situation in India. An Address delivered by Mittadoddi Venkata Subbarau, Second Grade Pleader, Ongole, Guntur District, Madras Presidency at a public meeting held at Ongole on 13th July 1907. (Place of publication not mentioned. 1907), pp 29, 30.

† Siva is one of the Hindu Trinity⁴ the other two being Brahma and Vishnu.

†† Birth day of Siva.

2. K. N. Kesari : Na Chinna Nati Muchchatlu (Madras, 1953) (Telugu) pp. 78, 79.

trolling the crowds. There was confrontation between the government and the festival revellers under the leadership of Chinnappa Reddy who brought his best bulls for exhibition.

Mutually contradictory causes of the rioting appear in the government documents on the one hand and in the writings of the district and other Congress leaders on the other. According to the C. I. D. report on the rioting "a Reddy was drunk and that a constable trying to arrest him was severely beaten and thrown down by him. A rumour spread that the constable had been killed. Immediately some four or five constables from different places of the vast camps went to the scene and arrested the drunken Reddy and took him and the constable who had fallen down to the police station which had been improvised on the plain for that single day festival. A crowd quickly gathered and demanded the release of the Reddy. The constables at the police station (there were only seven or eight in number) refused and there was some altercation. The crowd began to pelt stones and sticks; the constables fired in the air. Suddenly some evil genius got behind the police station and set fire to the palmyra leaves of the shed which formed the station. The constables became panic-stricken and ran away. All this happened in an incredibly short space of time, perhaps in less than 15 minutes".¹ But, it is very difficult to believe that the arrest of a Reddy, that too when he was drunk and misbehaving could have led to a riot of that magnitude. It was the Mahasivaratri Day, considered to be very sacred for the Hindus. It is difficult to understand how the police concluded that Chinnappa Reddy was drunk. He was not arrested that day, and as such no medical examination was conducted on him. It was many days later that he was arrested, tried and hanged.

1. C. I. D. file No. 4 of the A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section, p. 64.

K. N. Kesari.¹ and Ayyadevara Kaleswara Rao² give us the reason for the rioting. The bulls which Chinna-pa Reddy brought for exhibition became unruly, and police who had been excessively severe opened fire on the bulls and killed them. This infuriated the mob. With full throated cries of 'Vande Mataram', 'Drive out the British' and 'We want Swaraj' the mob made the police and the police station the targets of their attack. According to the C. I. D. report cited earlier one constable was killed, another burnt to death and one salt peon was also killed. Two Reddy youths were found dead on the spot. Many police officials were seriously injured.

Later on forty five persons were arrested and committed to trial of whom twenty one were convicted one being sentenced to death, four to transportation for life and the rest to various terms of imprisonment.³ The person sentenced to death was Chinnappa Reddy, who became the hero of the district. Ballads were composed extolling his martyrdom, and even today they are sung by the people of this area.⁴ The Kotappakonda incident can be claimed as a shot in the arm of the nationalist leaders of the district.

HOME RULE MOVEMENT

The murder of an Austrian Crown Prince by a Serb in 1914 sparked off World War I. Great Britain declared war on Germany on August 14, 1914, and made heavy demands on India for help in that hour of her crisis and need. Annie Besant saw India's opportunity in England's need. She organised the Home Rule Movement, and started two journals for the purpose, *The New India* and

1. K. N. Kesari : Op. cit. p. 81

2. Ayyadevara Kaleswararao : Op. cit. pp. 112, 113.

3. M Venkatarangaiya : Op. cit. Vol. II, p. 61.

4. K. N. Kesari : Op. cit. p. 81.

The Common Weal. Bal Gangadhar Tilak also organised a Home Rule movement of his own on April 28, 1916 in Maharashtra, Central Provinces and Berar with the aim of educating public opinion and carrying on intense agitation for self - government.

Although there were two Home Rule Leagues of Besant and Tilak, they acted in close cooperation. There was an informal understanding between them that Besant's field of work would cover the whole of India except the provinces of Bombay and C. P. where Tilak's League would carry on the work.¹

Prominent leaders of the Guntur district joined the League. Among them mention should be made of Konda Venkatappayya, Unnava Lakshminarayana and Gollapudi Sitaramasastry.² Besant undertook a tour of Andhra, and as part of it visited Guntur town with Wadia and some of her followers and stayed with Kond Venkatappayya as his guests.³

As the Home Rule Movement was gaining momentum the government resorted to repressive measures. Besant was not allowed to enter into several provinces. At a public meeting of the Guntur Home Rule League on November 17, 1916 the action of the Chief Commissioner of the Central province and Berar prohibiting Annie Besant from entering those provinces was condemned. It strongly urged on the Government of India the immediate necessity of providing effective safeguards against the improper use of the Defence of India Act.⁴ A worse measure of repression by the Madras Government under Lord Pentland was the arrest and internment of Besant

1 R. C. Majumdar: Op. cit Vol-II, p, 367,

2, Ayyadevara Kaleswararao, Op. cit, p, 117,

3, Konda Venkatappayya, Op. cit, p, 204,

4. The Hindu dated November 12, 1916.

and her two colleagues B. P. Wadia and G. S. Arundale. The government's determined hostility against the Home Rule League stirred the whole country. Protest meetings were held at Tenali, Bapatla and Guntur.¹ The campaign resulted, as Gandhiji put it, in Home Rule for India becoming "a *mantram* in every village".² In Ongole, Mukthinutalapati Venkata Narayanasarma gave up his studies in protest and, Panchagnula Sivaramayya resigned his job in the Taluk Board Office.³ S. Subrahmanya Iyer wrote a long letter to President Wilson of the United States drawing his attention to the repression let loose by the Government of India, and one of the signatories of the letter was Konda Venkatappayya.⁴ When pressure was thus building up against the government, Besant and her colleagues who had been arrested on June, 15, 1917 were released on September 17, 1917.

At this juncture the enlightened public opinion in England realised that the despotic and irresponsible rule of bureaucracy in India needed a change and that a measure of responsible government should be introduced. Montagu became the Secretary of State for India. Soon after assuming office he made a historic pronouncement in the British Parliament that responsible government was the goal of British policy in India. He and other members of his mission arrived in India on November 10, 1917 and received many deputations in this regard. Among others, the Home Rule delegation waited on him. It was led by Annie Besant. Among the Home Rule deputationists was Konda Venkatappayya of the Guntur

1. M. Venkatarangaiya : Op. cit Vol-II, p. 113

2. B. Shivarao : India's Freedom Movement - Some Notable Figures (New Delhi 1972) p 45.

3. Ramachandrani Venkatappa's article "Ongolu Taluka lo Bahumuka Jateeya Chaitanyamu" in Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika (Ongole, 1972) (Telugu), p. 107.

4 Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit, p. 205

district.¹ In the address and memoranda presented by the Home Rule League to Lord Chelmsford, Viceroy and Governor General of India and Edwin Samuel Montagu, Secretary of State for India, the deputationists demanded "self-expression self- realisation and self-development. Our League, desires to press through you on the great British democracy the position that free and constitutional forms of government are the sole means by which growth and progress can be ensured to the masses of the population."²

In the Home Rule phase of the freedom struggle Guntur district played her part and contributed her mite.

Political associations and the formation of the Guntur District Congress Committee.

The Guntur district was formed in 1904. Before that, except Ongole taluq the other areas of the district were a part of the Krishna district. Even after the formation of the Guntur district a separate district Congress Committee was not constituted for almost eleven years. In 1915 the first Guntur District Congress Committee was formed with Patri Venkata Srinivasa Rao as President and Vishnubhotla Suryanarayana as Secretary.³

That some of the district people, however, kept themselves informed of the activities of the Indian National Congress even before the formation of the District Congress Committee is evident from the autobiography of Konda Venkatappayya. In the third Indian

1. Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit. pp. 204, 205.

2. The Home Rule League Demand : Being the Address and Memoranda presented by the Home Rule League to H. E. the Viceroy and the Secretary of State (Madras, 1917) p. 45.

3. Vishnubhotla Suryanarayana's article "Gunturu Mandalamu lo Jateeya Udyamumu in Gunturu Mandala Sarvaswamu p. 308.

National Congress that met on December 27, 1887 in the Pandal erected in Mackay's Gardens, Madras, presided over by Badrudin Tyabiji¹, Konda Venkatappayya then a student of the Law College attended it as a volunteer and closely followed the "inspiring speeches" of W. C. Banerjee, Madan Mohan Malaviya and Bipin Chandras Pal regarding the introduction of the representative institutions in India.²

Long before the formation of the district and the constitution of the Guntur District Congress Committee there were some associations in the Guntur town, which though by modern parlance were not political associations, still drew the attention of the government to the public needs and grievances. One such was '*Sadvichara Divya Gnana Sabha*' started in 1890 by Chunduru Kotayya Sresti of Nellore. Gopalkrishna Gokhale sent to this association literature relating to the '*Sarva Janik Sabha*' of Poona. People of Guntur town unaccustomed hitherto to attending any social or political meetings began to discuss and debate various political problems of the day. The members of the *Sadvichara Divya Gnana Sabha* started Tax Payers' Association.³ When in April 1892 the Governor of Madras Presidency, Wenlock, visited Guntur, Sanagapalli Ramaswami Gupta and Dupaguntla Purushotham submitted a memorandum requesting him to improve water-supply to the Guntur town and to increase the number of elected members of the Guntur municipality to ten.⁴

With the popular support they were receiving Kolchana Appayya Dikshitulu, Nyapati Hanumantha Rao Panthulu, Annavarapu Pundarikakshudu, Vavilala Ven-

1. Annie Besant: How India wrought for Freedom (Madras, 1915), p. 37.

2. Konda Venkatappayya: Op. cit. pp. 89, 90.

3. Grandhi Venkata Subbaraya Sarma : Jeevita Dvayamu (Bezawada, 1933) (Telugu), pp. 34, 35.

4. Ibid' p. 36.

kata Sivavadhanulu, Vinjamuri Bhavanacharyulu and Buddiraju Kanakaraju Panthulu started the Krishna District Congress Committee on July 1, 1892.¹

Prior to the formation of the district committee extensive preparations were made and meetings of the Congress leaders of the Krishna district were held on June 29, 30, 1892 in Guntur which was then a part of the Krishna district. Tremendous work was done by Sana-gapalli Ramaswami Gupta and other Guntur leaders in the formation of Krishna District Congress Committee. It was the first of its kind in *Andhradesa*, and no district Congress committee was till then formed.² Thus, the Guntur town showed the way for the formation of the first district Congress Committees.³

Though Guntur district was formed in 1904, the Guntur district Congress leaders functioned as an integral part of the Krishna District Congress Committee till 1915, in which year the Guntur D. C. C. was formed with Patri Venkata Srinivasa Rao as President and Vishnubhotla Suryanarayana as Secretary, as stated earlier.

In the very first year of its formation the D. C. C. sent Patri Venkata Srinivasa Rao, Eka Dandayya, Konda Venkatappayya, Neti Hanumantha Rao, Govindarajula Srinivasa Rao and Vishnubhotla Suryanarayana as delegates to the All India Congress meeting held in Bombay.⁴ Eversince, the Guntur District Congress Committee took

1. Ibid. pp. 38, 39.

2. Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit, p. 95.

3. 27va Gunturu Mandala Sabha, Sattenapalli - Sabhadhyakshuduga Sriyutha Nyapathi Hanumantharao Panthulu garu Upanyasamu (Guntur, 1918) (Telugu) p. 19.

Hereafter this is referred to as Presidential address of the Nayapathi Hanumantharao Panthulu in the 27th Guntur District Conference held at Sattenapalli in 1918.

4. Vishnubhotla Suryanarayana's article 'Gunturu Mandalamu lo Jateeya Udyamamu' in Gunturu Mandala Sarvaswamu p. 308.

a leading part in all national, provincial and local struggles. It played a positive role in the formation of a separate Andhra Congress Committee on January 20, 1918.¹

Gandhi emerged on the national scene in 1919 after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the horrors of martial law in the Punjab. Soon after when he blew the conch of non-violent, non-cooperation against the alien rule, the Guntur district extended overwhelming support to him. In some of the movements for national independence the Guntur district came forward and led other Andhra districts.

1. Ibid. p. 308.

From Moderation To Non - Cooperation

POLITICS OF MODERATION

In 1915 the first Guntur District Congress was formed with Patri Venkata Srinivasarao as President and Vishnubhotla Suryanarayana as Secretary. Eversince, it became the rallying point for nationalists. It gave a concrete shape to the aspirations of the people in the district, and six years after its formation is completely dominated the political life of the district.

However, the district leaders till 1919 believed only in prayers and petitions and in passing of resolutions. The freedom movement was not still broad-based and much less mass-based. It was confined only to the intelligentsia. No doubt, delegates from the district used to attend the annual sessions of the All-India Congress;

but the resolutions passed in them do not appear to have reached the masses.

Even in the Guntur District Political Conferences and various other meetings the dominant strain was praying for reform and passing of resolutions.

In a meeting held on May 10, 1914 at Tenali the ryots of the Guntur district requested the government for irrigation facilities.¹ In the Guntur District Conference held on June 4 and 5, 1914 at Ongole, Vinjamuri Bhavanacharyulu, while requesting the government for more agricultural facilities and pleading for more non-officials in the local bodies, exhorted the people to attain all-round development "with the help and the co-operation of the government".² Bhavanacharyulu regretted that though Lord Ripon introduced local-self government as far back as 1882, its benefits did not percolate to the Guntur district. To substantiate his assertion he gives a table to show the dominance of the official element in the District and Taluq Boards.³ :

	Ex-officio	Nominated	Elected	Officials	Non- Officials
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Guntur District Board	5	11	15	15	16
Guntur Taluq Board	1	8	8	6	11
Tenali Taluq Board	1	7	8	5	11

1. Vinjamuri Bhavanacharyulu's Presidential Address in the Guntur District Conference held at Ongole on June 4th and 5th, 1914. p. 14.

2. Ibid. p. 26

3. Ibid. p. 9

	Ex-officio	Nominated	Elected	Officials	Non- Officials
Ongole Taluq Board	1	8	8	4	11
Narasaraopet Taluq Board	1	10	7	4	11

In the twenty seventh Guntur District Conference held in 1918, the President of the conference Nyapathi Hanumantha Rao Panthulu felt gratified that the British government recruited soldiers from Andhra also thereby giving them an opportunity "to exhibit their loyalty to the British government".¹ In the same conference he requested the government to introduce compulsory primary education even by increasing land-tax.² Making some other such request Nyapathi Hanumantharao Panthulu requested the people to take forward their district "with the help of the government and the English people".³ In the special session of the Andhra Provincial Conference held at Guntur on August 17, 1918, the President of the Reception Committee Eka Lakshmi Narasimham Panthulu of the Guntur town, welcoming the delegates, appealed to the government to hold examinations for the Indian Civil Service in India also.⁴ This special session was presided over by Kasinadhuni Nageswararao, and well attended by "the major Landholders".⁵ The President remarked that "though many

1. Presidential Address of Nyapathi Hanumantha Rao Panthulu in the 27th Guntur District Conference held at Sattenapalli in 1918 p. 3

2. Ibid, p. 16

3. Ibid. p. 38

4. Avasarandhra Rastriya Mahasabha 1918 August 17 Aahvana Sanghadhyakshulu Sriyuta Eka Lakshmi Narasimham Panthulu gari Swagatopanyasamu (Place and year of publication not mentioned) (Telugu), p. 12

5. The Hindu dated August 19, 1918, p. 3

benefits were conferred on the people by the British government, the Indian nation was getting emaciated".¹ The conference requested the government to pursue a policy of "complete confidence in the capacity, intelligence, ability and loyalty of the Indian people".²

The district leaders, especially Konda Venkatappayya, busied themselves from 1913 to 1917 holding conferences and carrying on intense propaganda for a separate state for the Telugu districts in the Madras presidency. The district leaders were so seized of the issue that the very first Andhra Conference was held at Bapatla in 1913 under the Presidentship of Bayya Narasimheswara Sarma. The Chairman of the Reception Committee was Konda Venkatappayya.³ Choragudi Venkatadri, pleader and social worker of Bapatla, devoted all his attention to make the conference a success.⁴ In the second (1914) the third (1915), the fourth (1916) and the fifth (1917) Andhra Conferences held at Bezwada, Visakhapatnam, Kakinada and Nellore respectively Konda Venkatappayya concentrated his whole attention and devoted all his energy to the creation of a separate Andhra State. During this period his autobiography does not speak of any other major activity he undertook.⁵ Though this movement cannot be "regarded as inconsistent with Indian nationalism"⁶, it should be noted that it was the major issue with which the prominent leader of the district was seized. Vishnubhotla Suryanarayana, the first Secretary of the Guntur D. C. C. refers enthusiastically to only one

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1. Avasarahndhra Rastriya Mahasabha - Guntur 17. 18 August 1918 Kasinadhuni Nageswararao Panthulu gari Adhyakshopanyasamu (Place and year of publication not mentioned) (Telugu), p. 19
 2. The Hindu dated August 21, 1918.
 3. Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit. p. 171.
 4. Ibid. p. 170.
 5. Ibid. pp 170 to 193.
 6. Sri. S. Radhakrishnan's article " The Andhra Movement " in the Twenty First Andhra Mahasabha Souvenir.
(Place and year of publication not mentioned) (The souvenir is not paged)

resolution passed by the D. C. C. It was the resolution of February 12, 1917 passed under the Presidentship of K. Kotilingam Panthulu. The resolution says that the D. C. C. was of "the unanimous opinion that it is absolutely necessary to establish a separate Provincial Congress Committee for the Telugu districts in the Madras presidency". Vishnubhotla Suryanarayana says with an air of success that as per the demand of this resolution, the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee was constituted on January 20, 1918 with Nyapathi Subba Rao as President, Konda Venkatappayya as Secretary and C. R. Parthasarathy Iyengar of Chittoor and Siva Sankaran of Penu-gonda as Joint Secretaries, and that the head-quarters of the Andhra P. C. C. till 1921 was Guntur.¹ It was only after he plunged into the non-cooperation movement that Konda Venkatappayya stopped devoting his attention to the Andhra movement.

The activities of the Congress were confined only to a few, and the masses were definitely not associated with them. The Home Rule Movement made some impact, and though protest meetings were held at Tenali, Bapatla and Ongole over the internment of Besant and her colleagues, the movement did not acquire the character of a mass movement. The Home Rule phase of the freedom movement came to an end with the termination of World War I on November 11, 1918.

The political activities of the year 1918 in the Madras presidency did not perturb the government in Fort St. George. In the Government Fortnightly Report dated June 1, 1918, the authorities could record with satisfaction that "there was comparatively little

1. Vishnubhotla Suryanarayana's article "Gunturu Mandalamu lo Jatceya Udyamamu in Gunturu Mandala Sarvaswamu, pp. 309, 310.

political activity in the mofussil".¹ That the Congress did not make an impact till then on the people prompted Konda Venkatappayya to record his deep dissatisfaction over its activities. In his autobiography he records that though the Congress was established many years ago, its programme did not confer any benefit on the people.² It was by and large so on account of the non-association of the masses with the English educated class.³

EMERGENCE OF GANDHI

A true national movement does not remain sluggish for long, and as R. C. Majumdar observes, history shows that genuine national movements have seldom failed to throw up a great leader in the course of their progress, not unoften from the most unexpected quarter.⁴ In India the leader was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who was the most dominant figure in Indian politics and was the sole guide of the national movement from 1919 to 1947. With his emergence on the national scene in 1919-'Annus mirabilis' - a new chapter began in the history of freedom movement. "Never before had a leader emerged of Gandhiji's incomparable quality".⁵ The year 1919 saw the end of petitioning, praying and passing of mere resolutions of the Indian National Congress. The year also witnessed the beginning of a new era, the era of *Satyagraha* which radically changed the texture and tenor of the freedom movement throughout the country. Guntur district was no exception.

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1. L. Davidson, Acting Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St. George to S. R. Hignell, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department dated June 1, 1918 Letter No.1551 W-1 (A. P. State Archives, H. F. S section)
 2. Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit, p, 221,
 3. Ibid
 4. R. C- Majumdar : Op. cit, Vol-I, p, 271,
 5. Hirendranath Mukerjee : India Struggles for Freedom (Bombay, 1947), p, 129,

REACTION TO THE ROWLATT BILL

Gandhi, who had earned great name for successfully leading satyagraha movement in South Africa, Champaran district in Bihar and Khera district in Ahmadabad, reacted sharply to the Rowlatt Bill which was passed in the first week of March 1919 by which the British government in India armed itself with wide powers to intern people and to put down the national movement that was building up. Gandhi drafted a satyagraha pledge, which he wanted everyone that was prepared to suffer and sacrifice for the cause of the country to sign. The pledge ran as follows: "Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bills known as the Indian Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill No. 1 of 1919 and the Criminal Law (Emergency Powers) Bill No. 11 of 1919 are unjust, subversive of the concepts of liberty and justice and destructive of the elementary rights of individuals on which the safety of the community as a whole and the State itself is based, we solemnly affirm that in the event of these bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as a committee, to be hereafter appointed, may think fit and we further affirm that in this struggle, we shall faithfully follow truth, and refrain from violence to life, person or property".¹ This move for satyagraha evoked popular enthusiasm in Andhra as in other parts of the country.²

The Rowlatt Act described as a monstrous act by Konda Venkatappayya³ was placed in the statute-book in spite of countrywide protests. Thereupon, Gandhi called upon the people to observe April 6th as a day of fasting, prayer and national humiliation. In his appeal, which he issued from Madras on March 23, 1919, he

1 T. G. Tendulkar: Life of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol-I (Bombay, 1952), p. 293.

2, Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit. p. 1.6'

3. Ibid.

advised the people to observe 6th April as "a day of humiliation and prayer ...all work, except such as may be necessary in the public interest, should be suspended for the day. Markets and other business places should be closed ...I do not hesitate to recommend these two suggestions for adoption by public servantspublic meetings should be held on that day in all parts of India, not excluding villages, at which resolutions for the withdrawal of the two measures should be passed."¹ In pursuance of this appeal a complete *hartal* was observed on April 6th in Guntur. All work in factories, business houses and shops came to a standstill. A meeting held in the evening called upon the government to repeal the Rowlatt Act.² The Government in the Fort St. George was forced to accept that in "Guntur shop-keepers were induced to close their shops as they were told that under the Rowlatt Act, any Police Officer could imprison any person without trial for any offence³

This marked a definite break with the past. The days of protest by petition, prayer and mendicant resolution were over for the people of the district. Political work was no more confined to the educated elite, and Indian nationalism ceased to be purely intellectual. The factory worker, the peasant, the merchant, the student and above all the ordinary person, who had hitherto evinced no interest in politics, came to be vigorously associated with the national struggle for emancipation from the foreign yoke. With this change the national movement acquired robustness. It was indeed a stirring spectacle to see hundreds of the district people hitherto

1. The Hindu dated April 2, 1919.

2. The Hindu dated April 7, 1919.

3. A. V. Campbell, Acting Secretary to the Government of Madras Revenue (Special) (War) Department, Fort. St. George, Madras to Sir James Duboulay, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department dated April 21, 1919. Letter No. 2998-W-I (A. P. State Archives, H, F. S. Section)

bound heart and soul to their professions and occupations coming into the streets and taking part in political activities, some times legal and some times illegal, at the behest of the leaders, national and local. This participation of the masses was to unfold itself in the subsequent stages of the national movement with far-reaching results. This great psychological change in the society was wrought by the personality of Gandhi.¹

JALLIANWALLABAGH MASSACRE AND ATROCITIES IN THE PUNJAB

Though April 6, 1919 passed off peacefully in Andhra, tragic events took place in the North. On April 10th Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal, the two important leaders of Amritsar, were arrested and taken to an unknown place. This angered the people of Amritsar, and they marched to the Deputy Commissioner in large numbers to demand the release of their leaders. The mob was turned back and fired at, as a result of which there were several casualties. The crowd carried the victims in procession and on their way set fire to a bank, a railway goods-shed and some other public buildings. The mob violence was also responsible for the death of five Englishmen.² There were also disturbances at Gujranwala and Kasur. Hearing of the disturbances in the Punjab, Gandhi started for Delhi; but on his way he was arrested and turned back on April 10th.

The Government struck in a ruthless manner at the nationalists. When emotions were thus working up, a meeting was held on the 13th of April in Amritsar at the Jallianwallabagh to protest against the repression let

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1. Sarojini Regani : Highlights of the Freedom Movement in Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad, 1972), p.66,
 2. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : History of the Indian National Congress, Vol-I (New Delhi, 1969), p. 163.

loose by the government. When 20,000 people-men, women and children-gathered at the venue General Dyer entered the place at the head of a force consisting 100 Indian troops and 50 British soldiers, while one Hansraj was lecturing the audience. After closing the entrance to the Jallianwallabagh, General Dyer ordered his troops to fire. In all ammunition of 1,600 rounds was fired at the people, as a result of which 400 people were killed and scores of others injured.¹ "The greater tragedy really was that the dead and dying were left to suffer the whole night without water to drink or medical attendance, or aid of any character."² Martial law was proclaimed in Amritsar, Lahore and other places in the Punjab. Sir Michael O'Dyer, Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab perpetrated untold misery, and the people of Amritsar, Kasur, Gujranwala and Lahore were the special targets of his attack.

Though the government tried to suppress the news from the Punjab, it trickled down to far-off places like Guntur piece-meal. Leaders like Konda Venkatappayya were horrified at the British atrocities. Their confidence in the British government was completely shaken. "The British government in India is becoming tyrannical every day and it is rendering the people illiterate and poor, and subjecting them to worst repression."³ The atrocities of Michael O' Dyer in the Punjab became the theme of Damaraju Pundarikakshudu's play *Panchala Parabhavamu*. The play, where-ever it was enacted, created a chill of horror in the people. The Guntur Bar Association demanded the impeachment of General Dyer. It also decided to collect funds for the rehabilitation of those, who were the victims of harassment at the hands of the government. Konda Venkatappayya undertook the responsibility of raising the fund.⁴

1. Ibid. p 164

2. Ibid.

3. Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit, p, 221

4. Dr. Sarojini Hegani : Op. cit, p, 65

KHILAFAT MOVEMENT

Another factor that contributed to the tempo of the anti-British feeling among the Indians in general and the Muslims in particular was the publication of the Treaty of Sevres in May 1920 by which Britain and other European powers desired to dismember the Turkish Empire. This led to the Khilafat agitation in India under the leadership of Moulana Muhammad Ali, Lhoukat Ali Dr. Ansair etc. Gandhi who was thoroughly dissatisfied with the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms identified himself with the Khilafat movement. Time was propitious for him to launch the non-cooperation movement in the country with the active participation of the Muslims. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya says "The 'Triveni' of Khilafat and the Punjab wrong and the invisible flow of inadequate reforms became full to the brim, and by their confluence enriched both in volume and content the stream of national discontent. Everything was ripe for non-cooperation.¹ The *Desabhimani* of Guntur endorsed the non-violent non-cooperation movement of Gandhi. It wrote: "Just as Lord Krishna saved Arjuna, Gandhi has sounded his conch of non-cooperation to save the whole world. His message is a novel one. This will enable not only the Indians, but the whole world to attain salvation".² As Jawaharlal Nehru pointed out, "a demoralised, backward and broken-up people suddenly straightened their backs and lifted their heads and took part in.....a joint action on a countrywide scale. This action itself, we felt, would give irresistible power to the masses."³

THE CALCUTTA SPECIAL CONGRESS

With the back-drop of the Punjab wrongs, the Khilafat agitation and the dissatisfaction generated by

1. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya: Op. cit. Vol I, p, 199.

2. *Desabhimani* (Guntur) dated August 29, 1920.

3. Jawaharlal Nehru: *An Autobiography* (London, 1936), p.76.

the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms the Special Session of the Congress met in Calcutta from 4th to 9th September, 1920 "in the midst of most enthusiastic scenes."¹ Konda Venkatappayya, Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya and Gollapudi Sitaramasastry attended the session from the Guntur district.²

The special Congress took momentous decisions. Among them the most important one was with regard to non-cooperation. The resolution on non-cooperation was moved by Gandhi. The approved resolution runs as follows: "This Congress is of opinion that there is no course left open for the people of India but to approve of and adopt the policy of progressive non-violent non-cooperation inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi until the... wrongs are righted and Swarajya is established".³ The Congress earnestly advised the people to surrender titles and honorary offices, not to attend government levees, *durbars* and other official and non-official functions, to withdraw children from schools and colleges aided or controlled by the government, to establish national schools and colleges, to boycott British courts, to boycott election to the reformed Councils under Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms and to boycott foreign goods. The non-cooperation resolution was carried by 1886 delegates against 884.⁴

Thirty Andhra delegates opposed Gandhi's resolution. Among them was Konda Venkatappayya. The remaining delegates from Guntur stood solidly behind Gandhi at the Calcutta Special Congress. Venkatappayya opposed Gandhi's resolution "not because it was irrational" but because he thought that "there would

1. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya Op.cit, p. 200.

2. A. Kaleswararao Op. cit, p. 295.

3. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya Op, cit, Vol-I, pp, 202, 203.

4. Ibid.

not be many who would practise it, and hence it was impracticable".¹

On his way home from Calcutta, Konda Venkatappayya was persuaded by Gollapudi Sitaramasastry and Ayyadevara Kaleswararao to join the non-cooperation movement. Venkatappayya had given up practice as a lawyer on December 31, 1915, and had been devoting himself to public causes. He now gave up his membership in the Madras Legislative Council and decided to join the non-cooperation movement.²

THE NAGPUR CONGRESS

The Nagpur Congress that met in December, 1920 presided over by Salem C. Vijayaraghavachariar that "intellectual giant from the South imbued with the spirit of nationalism"³ put its "imprimature with almost rare unanimity"⁴ on the resolutions of the Calcutta Special Congress. Gandhi declared in the Nagpur Congress that *Swaraj* should be the aim of people and that it should be achieved by all legitimate and peaceful means. A new Working Committee of the Congress was elected with Lala Lajpat Rai, Vittalbhai Patel, Kalkar and others. Konda Venkatappayya found a place in the Working Committee.⁵

With the Nagpur Congress "an intriguing problem of Indian politics was settled for good; the Congress which had always discouraged agitational politics was

1. Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit. p. 223.

2. Ibid. pp 224, 225.

Ayyadevara Kaleswararao also refers to this in his autobiography Na jeevitha Katha, Navyandhramu - (Vijayawada, 1959) (Telugu), p. 205.

3. M. V. Ramarao: A short history of the Indian National Congress (New Delhi, 1959) p. 95.

4. Rc. C. Majumdar: Op. cit. Vol-III, p. 101.

5. Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit. p. 226.

now to preside over the non-cooperation movement. No more would the so-called people's representative organisation bear a complexion strikingly different from the awakened urge of the people''¹ Guntur district achieved the distinction, as we would see in the subsequent pages, of emerging as an important national laboratory for Gandhian political experiments under the guidance of her eminent leaders like Konda Venkatappayya.

BEZAWADA ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE MEETING

In pursuance of the Nagpur resolution, the Working Committee of the All India Congress met almost from month to month in 1921 at different centres. The Working Committee that met in Bezawada on 31st of March and 1st of April, 1921² made tremendous impact on the progress of the freedom movement in the Guntur district. Hearing that important Congress leaders like Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das, Moulana Muhammad Ali, Shaukat Ali etc. were attending the meeting large numbers of people from far and near including the Guntur district poured themselves into Bezawada. Gandhi was escorted to Bezawada from Puri by Konda Venkatappayya and Gollapudi Sitaramasastry.³ The crowds became unmanageable, and when arrangements in Bezawada were on the verge of total collapse, Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya from Chirala stepped in with his *Ramadandu* volunteers numbering a thousand strong. The volunteers restored order and contributed considerably to the success of the meeting. Everyone was pleased, and all praised Gopalakrishnayya⁴ who formed the *Ramadandu* volunteer corps

1. Ram Gopal: How India struggled for freedom (Bombay, 1967), p. 319.

2. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya: Op. cit. Vol-I, p. 212.

3. Konda Venkatappayya: Op. cit. p. 254.

4. Gummidithala Venkata Subbarao : Andhra Ratna D. Gopalakrishnayya : Life and message (Bezawada, 5035 Sravanam), p. 106.

with the object of inculcating in the people selflessness, wisdom, perseverance and non-violence, and to make them ready for the movement on which the country was embarking.¹

At the Bezawada meeting of the A. I. C. C. the collection of one crore of rupees for Tilak Swaraj Fund, enlistment of one crore of Congress members and introduction of twenty lakhs of *Charkhas* were enjoined upon the nation. The organisation of the *panchayats* and discouragement of drink were singled out for commendation.²

GANDHI'S TOUR OF THE GUNTUR DISTRICT

After the meeting in Bezawada, Gandhi undertook a tour of Andhra and as a part of it visited Guntur town, Bapatla, Chebrole, Munipalle, Ponnur, Chirala and Vetapalem in the Guntur district. In these places he received overwhelming support to his cause. People everywhere enthusiastically welcomed him. He received liberal contributions towards the Tilak Swaraj Fund and it was a sight to see women in Guntur town parting with their jewellery.³

GENERAL FEATURE OF THE NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

The decisions of the Calcutta Special Congress, which the Nagpur Congress ratified, found enthusiastic response from the people of the Guntur district. The non-cooperation movement in the district manifested itself in the following forms : boycott of elections, boycott of government educational institutions and establishment

1. Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya Sri Ramadandu (Bezawada, 1934.) (Telugu), p. 5.

2. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : *Op. cit.* Vol. -I, p. 212.

3. Konda Venkatappayya ; *Op. cit.* pp. 259 to 262.

of national schools, boycott of law courts, boycott of foreign cloth and promotion of temperance. Special mention should be made of defiance of forest laws in Palnadu, boycott of municipality in Chirala-Perala and the no-tax campaign in Pedanandipadu firka in Bapatla taluq and Addanki, Santhanuthalapadu and Duddukur firkas in Ongole taluq. These three attained countrywide publicity. They contributed to the growth of national movement so much that they are discussed in separate chapters.

BOYCOTT OF ELECTIONS

At the time of the Calcutta Special Congress, Konda Venkatappayya was a member of the Madras Legislative Council. He was the only delegate to the Calcutta Special Congress from the Guntur district that opposed Gandhi's resolution on non-cooperation movement on grounds of impracticability. But when some lawyers of Guntur gave up their lucrative practice, as a loyal and disciplined Congressman, he tendered his resignation for membership in the Legislative Council.¹ He also withdrew his candidature for a seat in the reformed Council under the 1919 Act.² Later, he undertook an extensive tour of Andhra which took him to far-off places like Kurnool, Cuddapah, Ananthapur, Bellary, Tadiparti, Hosepet etc. He exhorted the voters every where to boycott the coming elections.³ A Vysya youth Mattampally Bala Subrahmanya Gupta making Bezawada his centre of activity extensively toured the Guntur district, and appealed to the voters to boycott the elections. He vehemently attacked in colloquial language the moderates and followers of the Justice Party. His lectures, which were delivered in the language of the people, had a tremendous

1. Konda Venkatappayya: Op. cit. p. 225.

2. The Hindu dated October 2, 1920 (Konda Venkatappayya's Statement)

3. Konda Venkatappayya Op. cit. p. 248

mass appeal.¹ Because of intensive propaganda of this kind most of the polling booths in Andhra returned practically empty ballot boxes.² At the Chirala centre only two votes were cast in favour of J. Kuppuswamy Chowdary, an influential candidate. The two votes were those of his two clerks.³

BOYCOTT OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The programme of boycott of the government schools and colleges and the establishment of national schools evoked much response. Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya delivered lectures in Tenali about the boycott as a result of which the students of Tenali Taluq High School went on strike on February 2, 1921. The authorities closed the school for a week. There was a strong demand from the students to convert the Tenali Taluq High School into a national school.⁴ On the day of reopening after the strike a big procession was taken out by the students and the local leaders with a large picture of Mahatma Gandhi on a cart, and everywhere offerings were made with comphor. After the procession a public meeting of 5,000 strong was held. D. Gopalakrishnayya, G. Sitaramasastry and Bh. Prakasarao addressed the meeting. Brahmandam Narasimharao a teacher took great pains in keeping up the strike.⁵ In Bapatla also there was a student strike. Enthusiasm among the students in Bapatla was unabated for many days. The attendance in the school was miserably poor.⁶

Several students of the district gave up their studies and plunged into the national movement. Dhenuva-

1. Ayyadevara Kaleswararao Op cit. p. 296

2. Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit. p. 250

3. Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau : Op. cit. p' 127

4. The Hindu dated February 4, 1921

5. The Hindu dated February 11, 1921

6. The Hindu dated February 4, 1921

konda Subba Rao, Kota Viswanadham, Damaraju Venkateswarlu and Tanguturi Lakshminarasimham of the Ongole taluq gave up their studies. Chivukula Radhakrishnayya and Janjhala Venkatappayya of Ongole, as students of the Medical College, Visakhapatnam quarrelled with the Principal over the issue of wearing Gandhi caps and gave up their studies. Chivukula Krishna Parabrahmasastry also of Ongole sang Garimella Satyanarayana's "Ma koddu e tella doratanam" (We do not want this Whitemen's rule) and was imprisoned. Ramachandrani Venkatappa of Tangutur of Ongole taluq gave up his studies, went to Visakhapatnam, changed his name to Achyutuni Venkata Rao and was imprisoned in 1922 for five months for doing Congress propaganda.¹

In pursuance of the resolution of the National Congress on non-cooperation many teachers in the district resigned their jobs. In Tenali, K. Satyanarayana sarma, B. Punneya Sastry, Bh. Subbaiah, K. Sambayya and M. Devendrudu of the Tenali Taluq High School resigned as teachers and placed their services at the disposal of the Guntur District Congress Committee.² In Ongole, Ramayanam Lakshminarasimham, Dovala Rama Durgaiah Naidu and Malladi Subrahmanyam resigned as teachers and became non-cooperators.³ Gullapalli Ramakrishnayya gave up his professorship in the A. E. L. M. College Guntur and devoted his time and energy for the Congress work.⁴

1. Ramachandrani Venkatappa's article "Ongolu Taluka lo Bahumukha Jateeya Chaitanyamu" in Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika, (Ongole, 1972) (Telugu), pp, 110, 111

2. The Hindu dated January 27, 1921

3. Ramachandrani Venkatappa's article "Ongolu Taluka lo Bahumukha Jateeya Chaitanyamu" in Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika (Ongole 1972) (Telugu) p. 111

4. Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit, p. 251

NATIONAL SCHOOLS

To provide instruction to those who left the government educational institutions and to play the role of nurseries of patriots several national schools were started in the Guntur district. Of them mention should be made of the Ongole National School and Tenali National School.

The genesis of a national school in Ongole was a monster meeting held there on February 8, 1921 addressed by Tanguturi Prakasam, who spoke at length on the importance of national education. The local leaders, thereupon, in consultation with him resolved upon starting National High School on 9th February. As there was no building available for locating the school, Prakasam placed his newly constructed spacious building at the disposal of the local leaders.¹ The national school named *Jateeya Vidyalaya*, Ongole was started on 9th February by T. Prakasam in his new building on the western side of the town. The school made rapid progress and by the middle of March there were one hundred and forty five students of various communities including Muslims. There were eighteen members of the teaching staff. O. M. Subrahmanyam was appointed Honorary Principal and P. L. Narayanarao, B.A., LL.B. (Allahabad) was the Chief Professor in Hindi. Besides formal education, vocational training was also imparted to the students. Commercial subjects like short-hand, typewriting and banking were also taught.² An industry was started in the Vidyalaya - cutlery - comprising of the manufacture of pen-knives, razors, scissors and locks. This had been a traditional industry of a small family of goldsmiths in the neighbouring village of Cheruvu-

1. The Hindu dated February 10, 1921

2. The Hindu dated March 18, 1921

kommupalem (Ongole taluq). Sutaram Kotilingam of this family was invited to this school and was appointed teacher.¹ Some other teachers like Panchagnula Suryanarayana, Nayani Subbarao, Kuruganti Sitaramayya, Malladi Subrahmanyam and Dovala Ramadurgaian Naidu were nationalists and enthusiastic non-cooperators.² Neelamraju Venkata Seshayya, who received instruction in Telugu short-hand in the *Vidyalyaya*, blossomed into a first grade journalist and retired as the Editor of *Andhra Prabha*, a leading Telugu Daily.³

Another important national school of the Guntur district started early in 1921 was *Tilak Jatheeya Pathasala* Tenali. It was located in the compound of Chunduri Hanumantha Rao, a Vysya. Students, who gave up their studies in schools wedded to government curriculum, joined this institution and the total strength of the school since its inception was more than one hundred.⁴ Gullapalli Ramakrishnayya who resigned his Professorship in the A. E. L. M. College, Guntur, was the first Head-master.⁵ T. Siva Sankara Swamy, the eminent Telugu Writer, resigned his job in the U.L.C.M. College, Guntur, joined the institution, and taught Hindi, Sanskrit and Telugu.⁶ K. Satyanarayana Sarma and B. Punneya Sastry, who resigned their jobs in the Taluk High School on January 26, 1921, joined this national school.⁷ The school followed a national curriculum drawn by Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya⁸, who made a

1. Ramachandruni Venkatappa's article 'Ongolu Taluka lo Bahumukha Jatheeya Chaitanyamu in Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika, (Ongole 1972) (Telugu), p' 121.

2. Ibid. p. 120

3. Ibid.

4. Signed Statement of T. Sivasankara Swamy.

5. Signed Statement of G. V. Punneya Sastry.

6. Signed Statement of T. Sivasankara Swamy.

7. The Hindu dated January 27' 1921.

8. Signed Statement of T. Sivasankara Swamy.

stint as teacher in *Andhra Jatheeya Kalasala* Machili patnam founded in 1910 by Kopalle Hanumantha Rao.¹ Besides general education instruction on nationalism and national movement was also given in the Tenali National School²

By February 18, 1921 there was a national school in Bapatla with more than a hundred students. Kondanadu Hanumantha Rao trained the students who left the government schools.³ Unnava Lakshminarayana after serving the one year sentence passed on him in July 1921 returned to Guntur, and with the active cooperation of his wife Lakshmibayamma started a national school called *Saradaniketan* in Guntur for girls. The Zamindar of Munagala gave financial assistance to this venture. In addition to Telugu, Sanskrit, Hindi and English the girls were taught sewing, weaving, carpentry, painting, music etc.⁴

At the height of the non-cooperation movement there were eighteen national schools in Guntur district and the National Education Committee - *Gunturu Mandala Jatheeya Vidya Parishad* - was constituted with Gullapalli Ramakrishnayya as President and Brahmandam Narasimham as Secretary.⁵

Interest thus engendered in the district for national education in the wake of the non-cooperation movement survived even after the movement was called off after the Chauri Chaura incident in February 1922. In 1925 *Guntur Mandala Jatheeya Vidya Parishad* brought out a compact work called '*Jatheeya Vidya*' in which the writer Gulla-

1. Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau : Op cit. pp. 28, 30.

2. Signed Statement of G. V. Punneya Sastry.

3. *The Hindu* dated February 18, 1921.

4. Kanuparthi Varalakshamma: Op. cit. pp. 35, 36.

5. Ayyadevara Kaleswararao : Op. cit. p, 328.

palli Ramakrishnayya made a comprehensive study of education, which included aims of education, curriculum, attitude of the students towards the teacher, elementary education, youth and woman-education etc. Even attitude to sex finds a place in his analysis.¹ The writings of eminent educationists like H. A. L. Fisher of Britain,² Aurthur Guiterman,³ Justice Hughes,⁴ Dean Burgess of U. S. A.⁵ etc. were extensively quoted in this work of one hundred and fifty six pages.

That the national schools in the Guntur district inculcated in the students intrepidity towards the government can be illustrated by a small incident that happened in Tenali. T. G. Rutherford, the District Magistrate and Collector of Guntur, one day came to visit the school without prior intimation. T. Sivasankara Swamy, engaged in teaching work, saw Rutherford entering the school smoking a cigar. He at once sent a boy to tell the Collector that it was improper to smoke in the school campus. The boy went quickly and informed him. Rutherford threw away the cigar, came to the class and "sauntered a little. I asked my students not to look at him which they dutifully obeyed. The White man went away some what piqued".⁶

That is why "in all ages and countries, despots and tyrants, as well as those who rebel against them make it one of their chief objectives to control education and enlist the sympathy and support of the students on their side."⁷

1. Gullapalli Ramakrishnayya : *Jateeya Vidya* (Guntur, 1925) (Telugu) p. 137.

2. Ibid p 39.

3. Ibid p 40.

4. Ibid p 43.

5. Ibid p 107.

6. Signed statement of T. Sivasankara Swamy,

7. R. C. Majumdar: *Op cit.* Vol-III, p. 61.

BOYCOTT OF LAW COURTS

Immediately after the Calcutta Special Congress, Unnava Lakshminarayana, Gollapudi Sitaramasastry, Madabhushi Vedantam Narasimhacharyulu, Nadimpally Venkata Lakshmi Narasimha Rao and Polisetty Hanumayya Gupta gave up their lucrative practice in the District Court of Guntur¹. As stated earlier, Konda Venkatappayya five years earlier i. e., on December 31, 1915 had given up his law-practice and ever since he had been devoting his energy and time for public causes.²

At a meeting of the Guntur Bar Association held on January 21, 1920, it was resolved that in pursuance of the Congress resolution *Vakils* should suspend practice for eleven months from 1st February. The following *Vakils* immediately announced their willingness "to suspend their practice and engage themselves in non-cooperation": Aka Lakshmi Narasimham, Madhavapeddi Hanumantha Rao, Chinthalapati Dakshina Murthy, Aka Dandayya (Government Pleader), Kotamraju Hanumantharao, Patibanam Satyanarayana, Nadimpalli Sitaramayya and Gollapudi Ramanadhayya. Including Gollapudi Sitaramasastry, N. V. L. Narasimharao, Madabhushi Vedantam Narasimhacharyulu, S. Parvatheesam and Barrister Hanumayya Gupta, who had suspended practice immediately after the Calcutta Special Congress, the total is fourteen.³

N. V. L. Narasimharao and Gollapudi Ramanadhayya went to Ongole and exhorted the *vakils* there to give up practice. In response to their appeal and exhortation twenty *vakils* of Ongole declared their intention to give

1. Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit. p, 225

2. Ibid, p 188 A. Kaleswararao also refers to this in his autobiography, p, 226 Kaleswararao says that when Konda Venkatappayya gave up his practice, he was only 49 years old and that he was at the height of his profession.

3. The Hindu dated January 31, 1921.

up practice, and issued a statement to that effect. Among them Neelamraju Chalapathirao, Valluri Narayanarao, Kondapi Ramakrishnarao, Sriramula Radhakrishnayya, Mallavarapu Subbarao and Throvagunta Nandikeswararao carried on intensive Congress propaganda in Ongole and the surrounding areas.¹ Valluri Narayanarao was sentenced to one year imprisonment for his role in the Duddukur no-tax campaign.²

In Narasaraopet, Kolavennu Ramakoteswararao gave up his practice. Later on he started *Triveni*, an English journal, and used it as a vehicle to propagate Congress ideals.³

Though it does not directly concern the Guntur district mention should be made of Tanguturi Prakasam giving up his legal profession in the city of Madras in January 1921.⁴ After completing his Barrister's course in London and returning to India he set up practice in 1907. Overcoming stiff competition from eminent lawyers like Bhashyam Ayyangar, Krishnaswami Iyer, Sundara Iyer, Alladi, N. Varadachari, T. R. Venkataramasastry and V. V. Srinivasa Iyyangar,⁵ he picked up good practice, and by 1919 he was taking from his clients one thousand rupees as fees for one day's arguments.⁶ When he gave up such a practice and joined the non-cooperation movement, the prestige of the Congress organisation shot up in Andhra,⁷ and as he was a native of the Ongole

1. Ramachandruni Venkatappa's article "Ongolu Taluka lo Bahumukha Jateeya Chaitanyamu" in Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastripurthi Sanchika. (Ongole, 1972), (Telugu), p. 110

2. The Hindu dated January 15, 1922.

3. Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit., p. 252

4. Tanguturi Prakasam: Na Jeevita Yatra, (Madras, 1972) (Telugu), p. 113.

5. Ibid p 115

6. Ibid p 125

7. V. Venkateswarlu: Andhra Kosari Tanguturi Prakasam Panthulugari Jeevitamu (Madras, 1951) (Telugu), pp. 76 to 78.

taluk, his action was a tremendous moral-booster to the non-cooperation movement in the taluk.¹

Merchants of the Guntur town took care to see that they did not go to government courts when disputes arose between them. A panchayat court was formed, and the leading merchants became members, and pledged to refer all disputes to it.² The Andhra Congress Committee appointed Digumarthi Venkatramaswamy President of this panchayat court which settled disputes satisfactorily.³ This panchayat court attracted the attention of the government.⁴

BOYCOTT OF FOREIGN GOODS

The Congress decided upon boycott of empire goods especially cloth. By this method it aimed to "hit the empire in weakest part viz., the Achilles heel of business the only part that is vulnerable and this does not require anything but will, wish and desire to do it and when this is done the will of British empire is sealed, signed and delivered".⁵

The government in the Fort St. George, Madras was shaken, and by threats, it wanted to cow down people's enthusiasm for boycott of foreign goods. It announced: "The Government wish their attitude towards the movement for the boycott of foreign cloth shops

1. Ramachandruni Vankatappa's article "Ongolu taluka lo Bahumukha Jataya Chaitanyamu" In Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika (Ongole, 1972) (Telugu), p. 109.

2. The Hindu dated July 30, 1921.

3. A. Kaleswararao : Op cit pp 338, 339.

4. Report of the Inspector General Police, Madras on the situation in the East coast Districts, dated August 27, 1921 (A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section.)

5. L. R. Tairsee : Boycott of British Empire Goods-Asa Businessman Sees (Bombay, year of publication not mentioned), p. 16.

to be clearly understood.....The government do not intend to tolerate disorder, and they assure merchants and importers of foreign cloth that they count on the support of the Government in opposing all unlawful attempts to coerce them in this matter. To this end instructions have been issued to all District Magistrates..... to take legal steps necessary to stop illegal picketing and to protect merchants, traders and their customers in the pursuit of their lawful avocations".¹

But the threats of the government and their attempt at 'divide et impera' did not dampen the enthusiasm of the people. In fact, the merchants themselves came forward and decided not to trade in foreign cloth incurring considerable loss. The Guntur cloth and yarn merchants without any exception signed a statement not to import foreign goods any more. The weavers also signed not to weave foreign yarn.²

In Tenali the student and the youth raised an organisation of volunteers numbering sixty. The students, youth and the volunteers picketed before foreign goods shops, and *The Hindu* dated December 22, 1921 described the results achieved in Tenali as 'phenomenal. During the month of December 1921, there was a steep fall in the purchase of foreign goods. Not even a yard of foreign cloth was bought' in spite of the counter importunities

1. Order No. 517 dated August 16, 1921 issued in the name of E. N. Marjoribanks, Acting Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St. George (Andhra Pradesh State Archives, Hyderabad, History of the Freedom Struggle Section. The Government Orders, Communiques, Press Publicity Statements etc, pertaining to the freedom movement do not contain any serial number of the State Archives, They are arranged in the files date-wise in the History of the Freedom Struggle Section.
The source of such Government Orders, Communiques, Press Publicity Statements etc. is hereafter referred to as A. P. State Archives, H, F. S., 2 Section)

2. The Hindu dated October 3, 1921.

of the local police, who had been deputed to the scene of picketing. The work was done with such self-restraint and remarkably non-violent persuasion that not one untoward incident occurred, and many of the merchants meeting the situation in good grace closed their shops, and returned home.¹

PROPAGATION OF KHADDAR

Substantial work was done in Ongole taluq in the manufacture of *Khaddar*. Kota Viswanadham and Kappara Narasimham did good work in the propagation of *Khaddar* in Chekurapadu, Madduluru and Uppugunduru of the Ongole taluq.² A Khadi Development Centre was started by Tanguturi Prakasam in Guravareddipalem. Dhara Gopala Sastry was appointed its supervisor. The All India Spinners' Association (A. I. S. A.) gave a loan of Rs. 10,000/- to the centre. This centre did such a good work that it received the appreciation of A. I. S. A. and Congress leaders like Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Jamanlal Bajaj.³ There were half a dozen shops in Tenali dealing in khaddar.⁴ Maddi Radhakrishnayya and Pendam Kesavulu toured Guntur, Mangalagiri, Bhattiprolu, Repalle and Palnad to stimulate the production of hand-spun yarn and cloth and in every way to carry out the Congress resolution on *swadeshi*.⁵

Khaddar, though coarse and rough, was accepted by the people in the true national spirit. Writing about

1. The Hindu dated December 22, 1921.

2. Ramachandruni Venkatappa's article "Ongolu Taluka lo Bahumukha Jateeya Chaitanyamu" in Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika. (Ongolu, 1972), (Telugu), p. 122.

3. Dhara Gopala Sastry's article "Andhra Kesari Panthulu gari to na parichayamu" in The Prakasam Birth Centenary Souvenir. (Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad), Telugu Section. p. 42.

4. The Hindu dated December 22, 1921.

5. The Hindu dated August 15, 1921.

the picketing before the foreign cloth shops in Tenali, *The Hindu* dated December 22, 1921 commented that it was encouraging to see "rough Khaddar becoming more fashionable than Brummagem fineries of the West, which had lost their veneer for the youth".

ANTI-DRINK CAMPAIGN

Anti-drink campaign made good progress in Guntur on account of the activities of temperance workers. The Hindus as well as the Muslims cooperated whole-heartedly to organise anti-drink campaign. Volunteers appealed to the contractors in the name of patriotism and temperance to boycott *Abkari* sales. The volunteers proceeded to places where sales were conducted, and despite the vigilance of the police succeeded in persuading the intending bidders not to bid. As a result of this sales had to be stopped.

In the taluq centres of Guntur, Sattenapalli, Narasaraopet, Ongole and Repalli the people completely boycotted the toddy resales, when they were held in August, 1921.¹ At Vinukonda, Patibanda Satyanarayanarao, Barrister Dasaradharamayya and Anantachari were present, when the government conducted the *Abkari* re-sales on 13th August. There were no bidders except one Christian, who subsequently applied for cancellation.² On the 29th August Palnad taluq resales at Gurajala attracted hundreds of people from surrounding villages to the taluq office. Volunteers entreated bidders not to go in for toddy sales. All abstained from bidding, but the Muslim Salt Assistant Inspector dragged in two Muslim ryots standing by, and induced them by threats to bid. On the whole six shops were sold which fetched to the govern-

1. The Hindu dated September 2, 1921.

2. The Hindu dated August 12, 1921.

ment a revenue of Rs. 12/- per month as against Rs. 1,200/- per annum last year.¹ Dr. Syed Muhammad, Secretary of the Bihar Provincial Khilafat Committee arrived on August 6th and addressed a large meeting in Guntur. He raised great enthusiasm among Muslims with regard to temperance. Among Muslims Shaik Fareed, a non-cooperator, did good work in preaching temperance.² Unnava Lakshmibayamma was active in Guntur in appealing to the contractors to boycott *Abkari* sales.³

RESULTS OF THE NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT

Thus, the boycott of the Council, law courts, schools and colleges and the constructive programme marked by the establishment of national schools and *Panchayat* courts, temperance and propagation of *Khaddar* on which Gandhi and the Congress wanted to raise the edifice of *Swaraj* was strongly laid in the Guntur district during the whole year of 1921.

However, it may be argued that the number of boycotting lawyers and students was rather small and that the British courts, educational institutions and government offices were not crippled in any way. The resignations from government jobs were also insignificant. Konda Venkatappayya under a separate chapter in his autobiography refers to the resignations of Digumarthi Venkata Ramaswamy, Ravuri Ranga Rao, and Wadlamudi Mukteswara Prasada Rao and Brahmajosyula Subrahmanyam.⁴ Ramachandrani Venkatappa refers to the resig-

1. The Hindu dated September 2, 1921.

2. The Hindu dated August 15, 1921.

3. Madala Veerabhadrarao: Gunturu Zilla Swarajya Udyamamu 1920-'30
Ujvala Ghattalu (Published by the author. 1974) (Telugu), p. 39.

4. Konda Venkatappayya: Op. cit, p. 250.

nation of Kappara Narasimham, Panchagnula Srikrishnaih, Achyutuni Govinda Rao and Achyutuni Pitchayya Sarma.¹

The resignations of the government officials might be limited. The lawyers and the students that boycotted court and schools might also be small in number. But, it should be noted that for the first time in the Guntur district there emerged on account of these resignations and boycott-programme a band of whole-time leaders and workers who made attainment of freedom for the mother-country their only goal in life.

They consecrated themselves wholly to its realisation. A study of the lives and activities of those that gave up their professions, jobs and studies amply proves this. Before the emergence of Gandhi and the Calcutta Special Congress, Vinjamuri Bhavanacharyulu, Sanagapalli Ramaswamy Gupta, Vishnubhotla Suryanarayana and for that matter even Konda Venkatappayya did not take up service to the country as a whole-time job but only as a pastime of leisure. Further, political work before Gandhi had been carried on so long as it did not hurt the pockets of those that were in it. But from 1920 when eminent lawyers, other professional people and enthusiastic students took to the freedom movement on whole-time basis incurring considerable loss, the masses were galvanised. Politics ceased to be intellectual callisthenics; it came to be the business of common man. This marks a definite break with the past. Moreover, it should be noted that it was not a mere boycott of British schools, colleges, courts and jobs. It was a boycott of the British Government.

1. Ramachandruni Venkatappa's article "Ongolu Taluka lo Bahumukha Jatocya Chaitanyamu" in Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika (Ongole, 1972) (Telugu), p. 111.

The success of the boycott programme can be summed up with the following observation of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: "The Triple Boycott had been fairly successful. Though the Legislatures were not empty, no Congressman had gone there. The Lawyers on the whole made a good response and the student community had come out of the ordeal with flying colours".¹

Another important feature of the movement of 1921 was that "the narrow domestic walls gave way"² and the women were drawn into the vortex of the freedom struggle.

In the propagation of temperance Unnava Lakshmi-bayamma played a key-role in Guntur. After the Congress Working Committee meeting in Bezawada, when Gandhi undertook a tour of the Guntur district, women came forward and contributed their jewellery to the Tilak Swaraj Fund.³ Patibandla Kotamma and Vasireddi Rajyalakshmmamma of Bapatla gave away their gold jewels to '*Swarajya Nidhi*'. When women, who for centuries chained to narrow domestic life under the weight of tradition and custom, stepped into the streets,⁵ and attached greater value to freedom than to their gold jewels, one can with certainty say that Gandhi's call for independence reached every nook and corner of the district.

More than anything, the district people became intrepid and learnt the first scientific lessons to carry on an organised agitation against the government for the attainment of *Swaraj*. The Government let loose repres-

1. Subhas Chandra Bose : *The Indian Struggle 1920-42* (Bombay, 1964). pp 55, 56.

2. Pratima Asthana ; *Women's Movement in India* [Delhi, 1974], p. 117

3. Konda Venkatsappayya : *Op. cit.* p. 259.

4. *The Hindu* dated February 18, 1921.

5. Sarojini Regani : *Op. cit.* p. 68.

sion, and prosecutions were levelled against the people on flimsy grounds. According to the government account the highest number of persons who courted imprisonment during the non-cooperation movement came from Guntur district "in respect of events arising out of N. C. O. and Khilafat agitation since the end of October 1921".¹ Still the people carried on the boycott programme and constructive activity with great resolve and nerve.

This intrepidity in the face of personal loss to life and property manifested itself in the defiance of forest laws in Palnad, the boycott of municipality in Chirala and the withholding of the payment of taxes in Pedanandipadu firka of the Bapatla taluq and Duddukur, Addanki and Santhanuthalapadu firkas of the Ongole taluq. In these places the freedom struggle passed from the stage of non-cooperation to the stage of civil disobedience. These three episodes made great history and they are separately dealt with in three chapters.

The Guntur District Congress Committee shed its former attitude of prayer and petition and the passing of mere resolutions, and became so emboldened that in its General Body meeting held on October 13, 1921, Kolavennu Ramakoteswararao presiding, it appealed to the Indians not "to join the army, navy, police and other security services as it is detrimental to the honour of the country and ideal of *Swaraj*".² Again the General Body of the Guntur District Congress Committee meeting on November 10, 1921, Anche Sivayya presiding, appeal to the

1. Acting Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras to the Secretary, Government of India, Home Department, New Delhi, dated October 17, 1922, Letter No. 191-4 [A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section].

2. Resolution of the General Body of the Guntur District Congress Committee passed on 13-10-'21 (available in its printed form in the Saraswathiniketan, Vetapalem)

lawyers and students, who persisted in attending the courts and schools, to desist from doing so. It threatened them with social boycott if they did not heed to its advice.¹ The Guntur District Conference held on June 10th 1921 with M. Ramaswamy Gupta in chair unanimously accepted the resolution proposed by K. Ramakoteswara-rao that the time was ripe for the withdrawal of government servants, civil and military.² The Guntur D.C.C.'s call to the army to abandon service was true to the manifesto of Gandhi which said, "It is contrary to national interest for any Indian to serve as civilian, and more especially as a soldier under the Government".³

The willingness on the part of large numbers to make sacrifices for the sake of the country and the intrepidity which the non-cooperation movement engendered in a cross-section of the people of the district created quite a deal of flutter in the bureaucratic dove-cots as is evident from the fortnightly reports prepared by the government. The report of 4th August 1921 says: "The situation in Guntur is threatening and strong measures will be required to counteract the prevalent contempt for authority".⁴ The report of December 6, 1921 concluded that "Guntur continues to be centre of propaganda".⁵ The Inspector General of Police, Madras formed the opinion that the "demand for swaraj has been very widely and firmly implanted in the district of Guntur".⁶

1. Resolution of the General Body of the Guntur District Congress Committee passed on 10-11-21 (available in its printed form in the Saraswathiniketan, Vetapalem)

2. The Hindu dated June 13, 1921.

3. D. G. Tendulkar: Op. cit. Vol-II, p. 82.

4. Quoted in M. Venkatarangaiya's The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra) Vol-III (Hyderabad, 1965) p. 20.

5. R. A. Graham I. C. S. Acting Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras to S. P. O' Donnell, C. I. E., I. C. S., Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department dated December 6, 1921. (A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

6. Report of the Inspector General of Police, Madras on the situation in the East Coast Districts dated August 27, 1921. (A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

The Government of India also had to conclude that "Mr. Gandhi's intensive movement during 1921 and 1922 had diffused far and wide among classes previously oblivious to political considerations a strong negative patriotism born of race hatred to the foreigner. The less prosperous classes both in the town and the country have become aroused to certain aspects of the existing political situation".¹ This was so inspite of the fact that the agitators were "dealt with frequently enough and promptly enough....."²

Gandhi's endeavour in the non-cooperation movement was "to involve as many men as possible, and make sure of the ground he was traversing".³ This was largely accomplished in the Guntur district.

JUSTICE PARTY VIS-A-VIS GUNTUR DISTRICT

The Government made effort to build up an anti-non-cooperation campaign in the Guntur district with the help of one P. V. Krishnaiah Choudary "who was the only non-official who was making the slightest attempt to start an open and public anti-N.C.O. campaign....."⁴ Such efforts on the part of the government did not make much headway. The Justice Party which was opposed to the non-cooperation movement did not get any response from the district. Sir. K. V. Reddi Naidu, its leader and a minister for one of the 'Transferred subjects' in the Madras presidency visited Tenali on September 15, 1921.

1 India in 1921-2. pp. 107, 108.

2 Davidson, District Collector, Guntur to Marjoribanks, Chief Secretary, Government of Madras, Fort St. George Madras dated August 20, 1921, (A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

3, Nirmal Kumar Bose & P.H. Patwardhan : Gandhi in Indian Politics (Bombay, 1967), p. 26.

4, Robertson, District Collector, Guntur to Marjoribanks, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras dated June 26, 1921, (A. P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

In a public meeting there, he referred to the non-cooperation and said, "by following the ways of the non-cooperators India would not gain what she wanted. Boycott of schools would only serve to steep India in ignorance. Again to give up foreign trade would also be a piece of madness. Foreign trade meant the increase of India's wealth".¹ His was a cry in wilderness, for the Tenali people whole-heartedly tried to implement the boycott call of the Congress, The neighbouring Guntur town gave a devastating reply to the entreaties of Sri. K. V. Reddi Naidu. P. C. M. Yathirajula Naidu leader of the Justice Party in the Guntur district² and Chairman of the Guntur municipality during 1918-21³ lost the elections to the non-cooperators in 1921 and in his place Muhammad Raza Khaq Saheb Belgani, an enthusiastic non-cooperator was elected Chairman.⁴ The Congress in Guntur made its debut in municipal elections as the boycott resolution of Gandhi in the Calcutta Special Congress excluded the local bodies from its purview.⁵

True to the Khilafat spirit, the Muslims enthusiastically took part in the non-cooperation movement. Ghouse Beg, who was sentenced to twelve month imprisonment in the 1921 movement,⁶ testified to this communal harmony.⁷ The election of Muhammad Raza Khan Saheb Belgani as Chairman of the Guntur municipality during the days when non-cooperation was at its height speaks of communal harmony permeating the district.

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1. G. V. Subbarao; Life and times of K. V. Reddi Naidu (Rajahmundry, 1957) pp. 112, 113.
 2. Personal papers of N. V. L. Narasimharao.
 3. Gunturu Mandala Sarvaswamu (Telugu) p. 153.
 4. Personal papers of N. V. L. Narasimharao.
 5. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya: *Op cit* Vol-I p 204
 6. Madala Veerabhadrarao: *Op. cit*, p. 182
 - 7- Signed statement of Ghouse Beg

Chirala -Perala**Satyagraha**

**DIFFERENT FACTS OF
NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT**

India witnessed unparalleled political movement after the Calcutta Special Congress. The whole nation was galvanised, and "an unprecedented wave of enthusiasm ran through India's teeming millions. Unparalleled scenes of fervour, devotion and sacrifice were witnessed everywhere".¹ During this upheaval when "the old feeling of oppression and frustration was completely gone",² there emerged local variations of the non-cooperation movement. As Judith M. Brown observes: "Gandhi saw non-cooperation as a way of involving the whole spectrum of Indian society in a

1. Tara Chand : Op. cit. Vol-III, p. 493

2. Jawaharlal Nehru ; Op. cit. p. 69

political movement. His vision was achieved on a scale far beyond that of the Rowlatt Satyagraha, because of the first time he made contact with groups.....who found in the techniques he offered ways of defending or promoting their local interests. The result was no monolithic political movement. Instead, non-cooperation became a chameleon campaign, taking colour from its surroundings as it was shaped in each locality by the particular forces at work and the strains and stresses of the local power structure. Every province, indeed every district, in India would provide evidence of this, but a few examples will show not only how a continental campaign took on a variety of local faces but also how it was precisely this flexibility which attracted men outside the old political nation, whether in the presidencies or in the backward political areas".¹

Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya also refers to the local variations of the non-cooperation movement. He writes: "In the year 1921 a spirit of resistance to authority was the dominant factor of public life, and people practised this in different parts of the country in relation to the conditions of life around them and the local and civic problems that confronted them".²

One such episode to resistance to authority of the year 1921 in the Guntur district was the struggle of the people of Chirala-Perala when a municipality was imposed on them much against their wishes.

1, Judith M. Brown : Gandhi's Rise to Power, Indian Politics 1915-1922
[Cambridge, 1972] p 322

2, B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya Op. cit. Vol. I, p. 219.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A MUNICIPALITY IN CHIRALA-PERALA AND THE PEOPLE'S REACTION TO IT.

In November, 1919 the Government of Madras issued a notification to the effect that Chirala and Peralala should henceforth be formed into a municipality and Jandrapet and Old Chirala should be separated from Chirala and Peralala and should constitute themselves as a Panchayat Union, and if there were any complaints against this decision, they might be notified to the government by a certain date.¹

As matter of fact, the government for various reasons had been trying to form a municipality for Chirala from the year 1914. When there was an out-break of plague in the Guntur district in 1914, Chirala was also afflicted and there were many deaths.² As a result of this, the Sanitary Commissioner recommended a municipality for Chirala in place of the Panchayat Union.³ But since the people were not in a position to bear the burden of taxation that the municipality would involve them, the District Collector of Guntur formed the opinion that there was no need for a municipality for Chirala.

In fact, though Ongole came under municipal administration even from 1876⁴, it was a victim of plague in 1914, and the people of Ongole town in large numbers had to leave municipal limits and live on the out-skirts in palmyra sheds.⁵ Whole streets of Ongole

1. G. V. Krishnarao; Chirala and Peralala Tragedy : An Episode of Voluntary Exile (Madras, 1922), p. 8
2. Basavaraju Apparao Sri Andhra Ratna Nyutulu (Vijayawada, 1963) (Telugu), p. 67
3. Ibid. p. 68.
4. Unclassified Ongole Municipal Administration [Records.
5. Pisupati Chidambara Sastry: Ongole Mahammari (Ongole, year of publication not mentioned) (Telugu), p. 4

wore a desolate look.¹ That the towns under municipal administration were not pictures of good sanitation and cleanliness is evident from the condition of Ongole.

M. Ramachandra Rao who reviewed municipal administration in South India beginning from 1888 and ending with 1905 brought to light many glaring defects. In matters of sanitation there was a cumbersome procedure. When the expenditure exceeded Rs. 200/-, even the most urgent schemes could not be undertaken without the prior approval of the Sanitary Board.² As the strangle-hold of the government officers was complete³, the municipal administration in the Madras presidency yielded very poor results. Moreover, Chirala then was not confronted with any major problems of sanitation. The soil was sandy and porous. There was no need on the part of the British officials to think of a permanent drainage scheme. Plenty of sweet drinking water was available in the village, and hence it did not require a water scheme.⁴

Further, when the government contemplated a municipality and thrust it upon the people of Chirala, the towns of Bapatla and Ponnur, though bigger than Chirala did not have municipal councils.⁵

In spite of all these factors a municipality was duly constituted in Chirala-Perala in January 1920 with eleven councillors and a Chairman.⁶

1 Ibid. p. 1.

2. M. Ramachandrarao, Municipal Reforms in South India (Madras year of publication not mentioned), p. 6.

3 Ibid, p. 5.

4. G. V. Krishnarao, Op. cit. p. 4.

5. Basavaraju Apparao, Op. cit, p. 70.

6' G. V. Krishnarao, Op. cit, p. 8.

The inhabitants vehemently protested, when a municipality was forced on them much against their will. The reasons for the people to oppose the municipality were not far to seek. D. S. R. Rao, special Correspondent of *The Hindu* (Madras), who paid a visit to Chirala at the beginning of May 1921, found the villagers very poor. Under the Panchayat Union they were paying a taxation of Rs. 4,000/- When Chirala and Perala were formed into a municipality it was raised to Rs. 40,000/-.¹ About 90% of the population lived by dyeing and weaving which brought them bare wages² of 4 or 5 *annas* per day³ (twenty five to thirty *paise* in the present denomination). The agricultural lands were not of good quality. Manufacturing activity was little. There was only one rice-mill and nothing else.⁴ D. S. R. Rao says that when such poor people were suddenly called upon to pay about nine or ten times the amount that they had hitherto been paying, they felt the taxation to be "very oppressive". Added to that when the municipality was constituted, the councillors indulged in petty oppression.⁵

The people made known their dislike of the municipality in many ways. They formed the Rate Payers' Association on February 18, 1920 to protest against the heavy taxes.⁶ When the Minister of Local Self-Government visited Chirala in February 1921, the villagers sent a deputation to him to dissolve the municipality. The Minister never cared for the strong public opinion. He

1. D. S. R. Rao's article "Chirala and self-determination" in The Hindu (Madras) dated May 27, 1921.

2. G. V. Krishnarao: Op. cit, p. 52.

3. D. S. R. Rao's article "Chirala and self-determination" in The Hindu (Madras) dated May 27, 1921.

4. G. V. Krishnarao: Op. cit. p. 52.

5. D. S. R. Rao's article "Chirala and self-determination" in The Hindu (Madras) dated May 27, 1921.

6. G. V. Krishnarao, Op. cit. p. 53.

threatened to post punitive police, to remove the railway station, post office and the hospital, and to station the military, if they did not agree to have the municipality.¹

David Washbrook, who made a study of the country politics of Madras from 1880 to 1930, found out that from 1921 the government attached great importance to the Ministry of Local Self-Government. The Chief Minister acted as the Minister for Local Self Government also.²

The Chief Minister and the Minister of Local Self Government was Raja Ramarayaningar, the *Raja* of Panagal and one of the foremost leaders of the non-Brahmin movement.³ When he saw the Chirala-Perala movement slipping into the hands of the non-cooperators and Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya, a Brahmin, the Raja of Panagal did not budge an inch on the issue of Chirala-Perala municipality. On April 1, 1921 he superseded the council and appointed a paid Chairman on a fat salary of Rs. 390/- a month.⁴ The people thereupon became riotous, burnt the toll-gate, placed the toll-bar across the rail-road and stopped the Calcutta Mail for sometime.⁵

PUBLICITY BUREAU'S STATEMENT

When agitation was building up against the municipality, especially after the supersession of the council, the Publicity Bureau of the Government of Madras issued a statement.⁶ The Bureau tried to make out that muni-

1. Ibid. p. 10.

2. John Gallagher, Gardon Johnson & Anil Seal (Editors), Locality, Province and Nation (Cambridge, 1973), p. 185.

3. Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau, Op. cit pp 76,77.

4. G. V. Krishnarao Op cit p 10

5. Ibid. p 11.

6. The Statement of the Publicity Bureau is entirely reproduced in G. V. Krishnarao's Chirala and Perala Tragedy; An Episode of Voluntary Exile, pp. 43 to 48.

cipality was established in order to confer on the people benefits and the privileges of local self-government. The statement among other things pointed out that Chirala had a flourishing weaving and dyeing industry, and that it was one of the biggest trade-centres in the district of Guntur. It had the capacity to pay the additional taxation. According to the Publicity Bureau, the town was in an insanitary condition, and the situation would improve only by converting the Panchayat Union into a municipality. But, the statement of the Bureau did not appear to conform to facts. Chirala was not in a flourishing condition. D. S. R. Rao, Special Correspondent of The Hindu who made a survey of the scene bears ample testimony to the poverty of the people. His conclusion was corroborated by G. V. Krishna Rao¹ and Basavaraju Appa Rao.² Regarding the sanitation of the town D. S. R. Rao writes, "So far I can judge, Chirala did not look particularly insanitary. Granting that the situation could be improved, the turning of the Union into a Municipality at a stroke against the wishes of the people was no solution to the problem. In fact, great many municipalities in this country are a disgrace to civilisation".

GOPALAKRISHNAYYA TAKES UP THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MOVEMENT

At this juncture had not Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya stepped in and taken the leadership of the movement the people would have definitely embarked upon civil disobedience and withheld payment of municipal taxes. There would have been an open conflict between the people and the bureaucracy, and violent incidents might have taken place. Gopalakrishnayya joined the non

1. G. V. Krishnarao: Op. cit. p. 50.

2. Basavaraju Apparao: Op. cit. p. 68.

cooperation movement in 1920 hoping to get *Swarajya* in one year, and Chirala was the arena for his fight.¹ As Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau observes, "he decided to go the whole-hog for Chirala and through Chirala to establish Swaraj for India.....".²

We have seen how Chirala had come under the spell of non-violent non-cooperation of Gandhi. In pursuance of the Calcutta Special Congress resolution the people overwhelmingly boycotted the elections to the council under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. Only two persons cast their votes, and they were the clerks of Justice Party candidate J. Kuppuswamy Chowdary.³ We have also seen how the Ramadandu volunteers of Gopalakrishnayya restored order and maintained perfect discipline at the Bezawada All India Congress Committee meeting. The people of Chirala-Perala gave to the Congress over Rs. 8,000/- by way of donation to the Tilak Swaraj Fund.⁴ Now that a municipality was imposed much against their wishes, the people and their leader took it as an issue to fight against the British government. Thus, they wanted to contribute their mite for the attainment of *Swaraj* for the nation.

At the time of the A. I. C. C. meeting at Bezawada the Chirala-Perala movement had already taken some shape. In March 1921 twelve of those, who refused to pay the taxes, including an elderly lady-Ravuri Alamelu Mangamma⁵ were arrested and sent to jail. She was perhaps the first woman in the whole country to be sent to prison for a political offence⁶ after Gandhi took command of the national movement.

1. Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau. Op. cit, p. 80,

2. Ibid,

3. Ibid, p. 127,

4. Ibid, p. 118,

5. Achyutuni Balakrishna Murthy: *Chirala Charitra - Jateeya Udyamamu* (Chirala, 1970) (Telugu), p. 14,

6. M, Venkatarangaiya, Op. cit. Vol-III, p. 32,

GANDHI'S VISIT TO CHIRALA AND HIS ADVICE TO THE PEOPLE

Gandhi's visit to Chirala on April 6, 1921 was a turning point in the movement.

Gandhi garlanded the twelve patriots, including the lady, who had been sent to prison for not recognising the municipality. He said he had himself gone to jail a number of times in South Africa. He was jealous of those who had the privilege of going to jail, because he found greater freedom within the prison walls. He congratulated the women of Chirala on producing one lady at least, who could go to jail. In his opinion the government grievously erred in imposing a municipality against the unanimous opinion of the people.¹

When Gandhi's advice was sought as to the course of action left for the people of Chirala-Perala,² he told them that two courses were open for them - either to offer non-cooperation with civil disobedience or to perform *Hizrat* as the Mussalmans, or as Tulsidas had "*Desatyag*". Both weapons in his opinion were equally powerful and equally effective. He asked them not to depend upon the support of Congress, but to rely on their own strong arm, that was self-suffering.³ "If the movement succeeded the glory would in part go to the Congress, but if it failed, the discredit of it should not attach to the Congress", he said.⁴

Gandhi laid the foundation-stone of the Ramnagar village and after the ceremonies were over, Gopalakrishnayya saw him off, when the future of Chirala cam-

1. The Hindu dated April 8, 1921.

2. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Op. cit. Vol-I, p. 219.

3. The Hindu dated April 8, 1921.

4. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya Op. cit. Vol-I p. 219. Konda Venkatappayya also refers to this in his *Sweeya Charitra* pp. 263 & 264.

paing was discussed and settled.¹ Civil disobedience in this case meant refusal to pay taxes and readiness to submit the attachment of property, and if necessary to go to jails in large numbers. Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya and the other leaders "apprehended that if they adopt civil disobedience, they might at any moment lose their patience and come into conflict with the bureaucracy, which waits with glee for an opportunity 'to make them learn a lesson which they might not forget for another fifty years.'² According to the Historian of the Indian National Congress, B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, "Gandhi suggested that if the people did not care for a municipality, they might leave the precincts thereof and live outside".³ If the evacuation was complete and successful, the municipality would automatically wither away. This was Gandhi's prescription to the people of Chirala-Perala. This conformed to the non-violent non-cooperation, which he had earlier inaugurated. It would avoid a direct confrontation between the people and the government. Gopalakrishnayya, who was "a great visionary"⁴ and who wanted "to attain *Swaraj* for India, perhaps in Chirala by the help of the Andhras at least in the year of Christian Grace 1921"⁵ decided upon people's evacuation of the town. The people, permeated with Gandhi's spirit of non-cooperation, readily responded to the call of Gopalakrishnayya to leave hearths and homes of their fore-fathers and to settle down in thatched huts - *parnasalas* - on the outskirts of the villages of Chirala Perala⁶.

1. Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau: Op. cit, p. 106

2. G. V. Krishnarao: Op. cit, p. 12

3. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya: Op. cit, Vol-I, p. 219

4. Sarojini Regani: Op. cit, p. 85

5. Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau, Op. cit, p. 82

6. Sarojini Regani, Op. cit p. 84.

THE GREAT EVACUATION

The evacuation started on the night of April 25th with the beat of drums, and the night rent with the cries of '*Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai*': Basavaraju Apparao, was a personal witness of this high drama that night, records that all people without any distinction evacuated the town and expressed their determined opposition to the municipality. "When I saw that mid-summer night men and women, old and young carry their articles of everyday life to their new places of residence leaving their old homes, I could not restrain myself. Tears trickled down my cheeks".¹

The Hindu dated April, 26, 1921 also give a pen picture of the Chirala evacuation. "Chirala and Perala evacuation is proceeding rapidly. Rows of country carts, laden with furniture, traders and their goods are constantly the villages'. Poor men and women are carrying their belongings on head-loads. All classes of people are cheerfully partaking. Mahatma's advice is strictly followed, though the paid Chairman is causing petty oppressionChirala and Perala are really abodes of heroes.....These places and their leader Gopalakrishnayya deserve congratulation".

D. S. R. Rao, Special Correspondent of *The Hindu* visited Chirala-Perala about the beginning of May 1921 and found out that "nearly 75 percent of the inhabitants of Chirala and 50 percent of those of Perala had evacuated their old homes. Those who could afford have rented houses in the neighbouring villages, but the vast bulk of the people were being sheltered under *parnasalas*, built of the bamboo and the palmyra. It was a sad sight to watch them and their furniture moved from their old homes to their new *parnasalas*. Street after street of

1, Basavaraju Apparao' Op. cit pp. 82, 83

Chirala was deserted and hardly a voice was heard along the lovely thoroughfares. The creek of the heavily laden carts, the din of the hammer strokes, the odour of the sun-dried palmyra leaves and the sight of the patient men, women and children trudging the dusty paths to their new homes sweating under the weight of their belongings were an overwhelming phenomena-they were indeed an inspiration".¹ The evacuation was the crowning consummation of Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya's political career.

That the revenue officials and the police tried to foil the evacuation-programme was borne out by the testimony of Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau, the biographer of Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya. But such was the ingenuity of their ever-resourceful leader, and such was the vigilance of its ever-watchful *Ramadandu*, that all those efforts were of no avail.²

The shifting greatly disturbed the economic life of the people. The poor villagers lost their wages for days on account of the dislocation of labour. The *parnasalas* cost them from Rs. 20 to 40 each, depending upon the size of the family to be accommodated. The temporary wells which were an immediate necessity cost about Rs. 5/- each, the more permanent ones about Rs. 50/- each. All told the new settlement cost them not less than Rs. 30,000/-. In spite of these economic hardships, the evacuation was carried through, and the people bore their burden nobly.³ As Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya put it, "Andhra Ratna D. Gopalakrishnayya put his whole heart.....and conducted the exodus which reminds us of

1. D. S. R. Rao's article "Chirala and self-determination" in *The Hindu* (Madras) dated May 27, 1921

2. Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau: Op; cit, p. 109

3. D. S. R. Rao's article "Chirala and self-determination" in *The Hindu* (Madras) dated May 27, 1921.

the earlier Hijrat of the Muslims of Sindh into Afghanistan".¹

PARALLEL GOVERNMENT IN THE 'PALMYRA CITY'

It was in the 'Palmyra City' that people of Chirala spent nearly eleven months. Gopalakrishnayya practically ran a parallel government. His biographer says that there was complete order in the place. *Panchayats* were held to dispense justice effectively to the delinquents, and more than one loyalist was levied 'a handsome fine' for the benefit of the 'Exchequer'. Government officials were boycotted and had to return for want of bare food and even water. In the new "Palmyra City" Gopalakrishnayya's word was law.² "Everyday there were judicial tribunals, legislative enactments and administrative orders; and almost every affair of every individual citizen was within the purview of the *Panchayat* over which Gopalakrishnayya presided".³ News of this *Panchayat* administration reached far-off places. At a meeting in Allahabad, George Joseph of the *Independent* remarked "who is the Governor of Chirala? Gopalakrishnayya or Lord Willingdon? It seems to me Gopalakrishnayya is the Governor of Chirala and not Lord Willingdon".⁴

1. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya. Op. cit, vol. I p. 219

2. Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau Op. cit, pp. 109, 110

3. Ibid, p. 117.

4. Quoted in Sasavaraju Apparao's Andhra Ratna Dyutulu, p. 87.

Even before the evacuation Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya's leadership in Chirala-Perala was unchallenged. C. R. Das during one of his impromptu speeches to the vast concourse of people that came to Bezawada during the A. I. C. C. Session on March 31, 1921 remarked that in Chirala-Perala the authority of the Madras Governor had evanesced and that Gopalakrishnayya had taken over the reins of administration. See Ayyadevara Kaleswararao's Na Jeevitha Katha, Navyandhramu (Vijayawada, 1959) (Telugu) p. 321

SYMPATHY FROM FAR AND NEAR

Chirala-Perala people's determined bid to oppose the formation of the municipality and their subsequent evacuation of the town received the approval of nationalists. At a public meeting held at Bapatla it was resolved: "The public of Bapatla do hereby approve the procedure adopted by the people of Chirala and Perala in opposing a municipality forced on them and they extend their sympathy in their difficulties".¹ The citizens of Madras assembled in large numbers at the beach opposite the Presidency College on August 2, 1921 to condemn the action of the government in forcing a municipality on an unwilling people and to express their sympathy with the people of Chirala "in their manly fight, suffering innumerable hardships". Among those present were S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, S. Satya Murthy, Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer, V. Ramadass, V. Venkateswarlu, V. L. Sastry, K. Bala Subrahmanya Iyer and M. K. Achary. The meeting was chaired by S. Srinivas Iyengar. Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer moved the following resolution: "This meeting strongly condemns the action of the Government of Madras in persisting to impose a municipality on the people of Chirala-Perala against the wishes and the best interests of the people". S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar moved the second resolution. "This meeting expresses the sympathy of the people of Madras with.....the heroic conduct of the people of Chirala and Perala". The two motions were put to vote and carried unanimously.²

Small contributions poured in for the relief of the people. S. Srinivas Iyengar, Luz, Madras sent Rs. 1,000 for the Chirala Relief Fund.³ The Guntur District Cong-

1. The Hindu dated July 27, 1921

2. The Hindu dated August 3, 1921

3. The Hindu dated April 24, 1921

ress Committee sent a donation of Rs. 250/-.¹ The Andhra Provincial Congress Committee granted a sum of Rs. 3,000/- for the Chirala campaign.² Tanguturi Prakasam arrived in Chirala on May 3rd and a meeting was held in the evening in which Prakasam and P. Krishna Murty of Bobbili spoke extolling of the determination and the nerve the people were exhibiting in the face of many hardships. A relief committee was formed with K. Venkatappayya as President, Desiraju Hanumantha Rao as Secretary and Narasimha Rao as Treasurer.³

GOVERNMENT ADOPTS STRONG-ARM TACTICS

When enthusiasm was thus building up in and for the 'Palmyra City' the government officials and the paid Chairman resorted to repressive measure. They devised various methods to break people's determination. Chirala Rangayya, Raghavayya and Peraiah were arrested for driving an unlicensed cart with two men thereon, and prosecution was launched against them. The municipal and the police officials were the only prosecution witnesses. The accused refused to defend themselves according to the creed of non-cooperation. Rangayya was sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment and Raghavayya and Peraiah to six months.⁴ The Guntur district revenue authorities were also hard on the Chirala-Perala people. The two hundred palmyra huts erected by the people were alleged to be encroachments on the government *poramboke* lands. The revenue officials resorted to levying penal assessment, and notices for forcible eviction were issued to the owners. Exorbitant penal cesses were levied. The rate for each palmyra shed was

1. The Hindu dated April 24, 1921

2. Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau : Op. cit, p. 118.

3. The Hindu dated May 6, 1921

4. The Hindu dated June 6, 1921

Rs. 1026/- though the shed itself did not cost more than Rs. 25/- each.¹

BERHAMPUR ANDHRA CONFERENCE AND IMPRISONMENT OF GOPALAKRISHNAYYA

The problem of finance was very acute for Gopalakrishnayya. Small contributions were received and Gopalakrishnayya himself made door to door collections. But soon the 'Treasury' of his 'Palmyra City' ran out, and Gopalakrishnayya had to go to Berhampur the venue of the Andhra Conference held in September 1921 in quest of *Sanjeevi* the vital coin.² Basavaraju Appa Rao, who participated in the Berhampur Andhra Conference, says that Gopalakrishnayya delivered fiery speeches on 27th and 28th September. He condemned the action of the Madras Government for the continued enforcement of a municipality in Chirala against the will of the people. He made a frontal attack against the Minister for Local Administration Ramarayaningar.³ On the evening of September 28th, when Gopalakrishnayya, accompanied by Basavaraju Appa Rao and some other friends, was coming out of the house of Gurazada Krishnamurthy Panthulu, a police officer served him with a warrant issued by T. G. Rutherford, District Magistrate, Ganjam, restraining him from delivering public speeches for a period of two months under Section 144 Cr. P. C.⁴ Though Pattabhi Sitaramayya and Tanguturi Prakasam advised him not to defy the warrant,⁵ a true non-cooperator

1. The Hindu dated July 27, 1921.

2. Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau : Op. cit, p, 118.

3. Basavaraju Apparao : Op. cit. pp, 92, 100.

4. Ibid. p, 101.

5. Ibid.

that he was, Gopalakrishnayya sent a wire to the District Collector which ran as follows:¹

“To

T. G. Rutherford Esq.
Collector,
Ganjam.

Ramadas Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya will address, in due disobedience of your order dated 28th instant, a meeting this evening. Please take notice”.

Before he actually defied the order of the District Magistrate, Ganjam, he sent a message to the people of Chirala-Perala in which he appealed to them to continue their struggle and discharge their duty to *Andhra Desa* and India.²

On 29th September, Gopalakrishnayya disobeyed the order of the District Magistrate, Ganjam, by addressing a meeting in Berhampur,³ attended by large sections of people including women. The student community was also present in large numbers.⁴ He exhorted the people to participate in the non-cooperation movement, and rid the country of foreign rule. He spoke at length of the valiant struggle which the people of Chirala - Perala were carrying on against the British government. He told the people that the government educational institutions were reducing the students to sycophancy. The teachers were like Chandamarkulut† of Hiranya-

1. Quoted in Basavaraju Apparao's *Andhra Ratna Dyutulu*, p. 103

G. V. Krishnarao also writes about the advance intimation which Gopalakrishnayya gave to Rutherford regarding his intention to defy the order of the Government. See G. V. Krishnarao's *Chirala and Perala Tragedy: An Episode of Voluntary Exile* (Madras 1922), p. 33

2. Basavaraju Apparao : *Op. cit.* p. 107.

3. G. V. Krishnarao - *Op. cit.* p. 33

4. Basavaraju Apparao *Op. cit.* p. 112

† According to the Hindu mythology Chandamarkulu were the mentors of the demons

kasyapu's* times. There was no justice in the law courts he said. He appealed to the students and lawyers to come out of the schools and courts.¹ His appeal made such an impression on the audience that four teachers, one lawyer and one clerk rose up and announced their resolve to give up their jobs immediately. One student doing his law course also announced his intention of giving up studies.² The noble patriot of the Guntur district besides making Chirala-Perala house-hold names throughout the Ganjam district, carried the gospel of Gandhi there and buttressed the people's resolve to fight the alien rule.

On October 1 when Gopalakrishnayya, Basavaraju Apparao and Ghouse Beg were about to entrain at the Berhampur Railway Station for Chirala, Gopalakrishnayya was served with an arrest warrant, and on October 2 he was put on trial in Srikakulam before T. G. Ruthurford.³

The Hindu dated October 7, 1921 gives an account of the trial-sence. Some of the exchanges that took place between Gopalakrishnayya and T. G. Rutherford, the Magistrate are worth reproducing.⁴

Magistrate :- You made an obscene remark about the King Emperor?

Gopalakrishnayya :- What is that?

* Hiranyakasyapu was a demon-king. His son, Prahlada, was a devotee of Lord Vishnu, and hence incurred the wrath of his father. Ultimately when Hiranyakasyapu questioned the omnipresence of God out of a pillar He appeared in the form of a lion and killed him.

1. Ibid. pp. 115, 116

2 Ibid' p. 116

3 Basavaraju Apparao ; Op. cit. p. 120

4. G. V. Krishnarao also gives an account of the trial scene of Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya and the exchanges that took place between him and Rutherford. See G. V. Krishnarao's Cherala and Perala Tragedy. An Episode of Voluntary Exile (Madras, 1922). pp. 82 to 95

Here the prosecuting Inspector read out a passage from Gopalakrishnayya's speech, which the accused denied.

Gopalakrishnayya :- I compared the government to Ravana †, Bali †† and Hiranyakasyapu. I have been doing so for the last six or seven months particularly because they present the exact analogies to the different aspects of the existing government from the *Puranas* which alone are competent to be presented to the masses so as to help their understanding - - - - -
 "that the present government have ruined the country is true and not false. My assertion that it must and will be destroyed hold true. I never mentioned any months in the absolute sense, though it is our hope to attain Swaraj in three months according to Mahatmaji's gauging of the situation."

The Magistrate :- You seem to be an exceedingly popular preacher. You raise laughter.

Gopalakrishnayya :- Laughter prevents people from becoming morbid. It lubricates soul about the mythological statement, I shall make a general remark to dispel delusion. First about Ravana I prefaced it with a correct thesis of *Rakshasa's* country according to the current notion. I said *Rakshasas* are not devils or demons but may be humans with an emphasis on a

† Ravana was the ten-headed demon-king. He developed wild passion for Sita, consort of Lord Rama, which ultimately led to his destruction. This is the theme of Ramayana, popular epic of India.

†† Bali was a demon-king with a generous disposition. According to the Hindu mythology, he pestered Gods and Goddesses. Ultimately Lord Vishnu one of the Hindu Trinity, in the incarnation of Vamana, the pigmy sized Brahmin, took advantage of Bali's generous nature, asked for three feet of land and crushed him into the nether-world.

particular manifestation of egoism. That is why I instanced Ravana's snatching away of others' women and contrasted it with existing government snatching away other's wealth..... in a similar manner while bringing the analogy of Hiranyakasyapu I said British Government stood to us in the relation of a father..... In the case of Bali, he gracefully and graciously offered what was asked of him and I said that it was a genuine relation which we all hoped for as an ally in an imperial brotherhood..... Generally speaking my view is in accordance with the Congress view and particularly I follow Mahatma Gandhi's precepts..... Lord Willingdon resembled Ravana with his ten heads. The eight ministers were the eight heads, Lord Willingdon's own head was the ninth and on the top of it all Sir P. Thyagaraya Chetty's* was the tenth.

At the last remark the Magistrate burst out laughing. The case was posted for judgement on October 3, 1921. The Magistrate sentenced Gopalakrishnayya to one year simple imprisonment as the latter refused to sign the bond and furnish security. Gopalakrishnayya told the Magistrate that as a Congressman, he could not do it and that he would "give security to a Free Government".¹ After the sentence was pronounced Gopalakrishnayya was removed to the Berhampur Sub-jail.²

On October 10, the police brought him to the Berhampur railway station to shift him to Trichinopoly Central Jail. Malladi Krishna Murthy Panthulu, V. V. Giri,

† Sir P. Thyagaraya Chetty was the leader of the non-Brahmin movement of South India. He was a loyalist of the British government and a sworn enemy of the Congress.

1. G. V. Krishnarao: Op. cit. p. 90

2. Basavaraju Apparao: Op. cit. p. 124.

Nyapathi Narayana Murthy, K. Ramakoteswararao and Muhammed Hyder Saheb met him on the platform. Gopalakrishnayya anxiously asked Giri about the condition of Chirala-Perala movement. Giri told him that everything was safe.¹

After being removed to the Trichinopoly Central Jail another case was brought up against Gopalakrishnayya under Section 124 A Indian Penal Code. The case was posted for trial at Machilipatnam on 10th November.² The subject of the prosecution was a speech which Gopalakrishnayya delivered at Ellore on June 26, 1921.³ The trial which started on November 10, 1921 before H. H. F. M. Tyler C. I. E., I. C. S., the District Magistrate, Krishna⁴ concluded on November 14th.⁵ Gopalakrishnayya was sentenced to nine months simple imprisonment running concurrently with the old one.⁶

G. V. Krishnarao who was present throughout this trial says that Gopalakrishnayya issued a message to the nation from the Machilipatnam sub-jail in which he said, "the Punjab wrong, Khilafat treachery and Chirala-Perala tragedy are but the *Avarohanas* - the descending notes - in the song of Swaraj whose *Arohanas* - the ascending ones - are the establishment of Swaraj in India and also in England, which awaits you in your oncoming struggle".⁷

WITHDRAWAL OF THE MOVEMENT

In the great enthusiasm which the non-cooperation movement of Gandhi created throughout the country

1. Andhra Patrika (Madras) dated October 14, 1921.

2. Krishna Patrika (Machilipatnam) dated November 5, 1921.

3. G. V. Krishnarao: Op. cit. p. 103.

4. Ibid. p. 100.

5. Ibid. p. 150.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid. p. 153.

Gopalakrishnayya thought that Swaraj was round the corner and that the Chirala-Perala municipality would automatically wither away. But on account of eruption of violence in Chauri Chaura, Gandhi suspended the civil disobedience movement, and when Gopalakrishnayya was gaoled, the people of Ramanagar were demoralised. Though Dr. Subrahmanyam, Secretary of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee had undertaken to continue the work of Andhra Ratna Gopalakrishnayya, staying in Chirala, and though Tanguturi Prakasam promised to visit Chirala frequently,¹ in course of a few months, "the movement slowly ebbed away and died".²

CAUSES FOR THE COLLAPSE OF THE CHIRALA-PERALA MOVEMENT

The people of Chirala-Perala embarked upon the evacuation of the two places to compel the government to withdraw the municipality. They thought that if they stayed out of the municipal limits, the municipality would automatically wither away. In this process they were subjected to untold suffering. Their economy was shattered. While engaged in raising the new township, they lost wages for several days. The police and revenue authorities and the paid Chairman were hard on them. They exposed themselves to the rigours of weather in their palmyra sheds. They passed one of the worst summers, when temperature reached 113°. They braved 10" of rain.³ During their stay in the 'Palmyra City' Chirala - Perala became mostly depopulated. Houses became dilapidated. Thieves knocked off wooden structures of the abandoned houses.⁴ But, within eleven months of their resolve they became demoralised, came

1. The Hindu dated October 20, 1921.

2. Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau; Op. cit p. 118.

3. The Hindu dated July 27, 1921.

4. Basavaraju Apparao; Op. cit. p. 88.

back to their old places of residence and accepted the municipality.

The causes for this are not far to seek. The issue was confined only to a small area with a population of 15,000. When Chirala-Perala people started evacuating the villages on April 25, 1921, the Indian National Congress did not yet give green signal for any area to start civil disobedience. The Congress gave people permission to start civil disobedience at the Ahamada-bad Congress session held in December 1921. Though Gandhi and Gopalakrishnayya decided to evacuate the people from the municipal limit to avoid direct confrontation with the government, it was civil disobedience they prescribed with all attendant risks - persecutions and prosecutions. Since the sheds were pitched in government lands, the revenue authorities resorted to levying penal cesses. Though the people evacuated the villages, still the government had the right to collect all municipal taxes, wherever they resided. In limited areas, where communities small in numerical strength, resort to direct confrontation with government on small issues, the latter have always an edge to win. Ramarayaningar, the Minister for Local Self - Government never cared for the public opinion. He was the leader of the Justice Party and the non-Brahmin movement. He was the sworn enemy of the Congress and the non-co-operation movement. He resorted to all means to break the will of the people. A small group of people, however much determined they might be, could not put up protracted resistance against a government that was totally oblivious of the difficulties of the people.

Though the national and provincial leaders here and there expressed their solidarity with the people of Chirala-Perala, it was a lone battle that they and their leader fought. The Congress did not make it a major issue to fight with the government at different levels.

Gandhi himself warned that it should not be taken up under the aegis of the Congress. No national or provincial leader visited Chirala to guide the movement and give encouragement to the people. Gopalakrishnayya himself said, "Why Chirala failed was that ever since they started the Chirala affairs, the leaders-all honour to them, honour for their valour and death for their ambition-had exhibited indecision and want of self-confidence Except Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar of Madras, none came there. No Congress committee came to enquire into their conditions They lacked the sense of responsibility".¹ G. V. Subbrau also attributes "jealousy of fellow Congressmen of Andhra" for the failure of the movement. He says: "The foremost leaders of the province were either lukewarm or a fully jealous of Gopalakrishnayya and his work".² G. V. Krishnarao also speaks of his-Gopalakrishnayya's-enemies and their jealous hearts.³ N. V. L. Narasimharao writes about the misunderstanding that grew up between Gopalakrishnayya and Pattabhi Sitaramayya.⁴ Gopalakrishnayya himself said that "in spite of one of their leaders, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, the Congress ultimately gave Rs. 3,000/- to carry on the movement".⁵

Another factor that contributed to the collapse of the movement was lack of adequate funds. Chirala-Perala people were poor. The evacuation considerably dislocated their economic life. The tempo of the struggle could not be maintained without adequate financial assistance from outside. Only small contributions were received, and the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee sanc-

1. Quoted in Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau's *Andhra Ratna Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya: Life and Message* (Bezawada' 5635, Sravanam) pp. 120, 121.

2. Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau: *Op. cit.* p. 120.

3. G. V. Krishnarao. *Op. cit.* p. 37.

4. Personal papers of N. V. L. Narasimharao.

5. Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau: *Op. cit.* p. 121.

tioned a paltry sum of Rs. 3,000/-. It was mainly for funds that Gopalakrishnayya visited Berhampur, where he was jailed.

In the early days of the evacuation programme there was great enthusiasm in Ramnagar. In the first flush of their scoring a point over the authorities, the people never thought of developing a second line of leadership. D. S. R. Rao, Special Correspondent of *The Hindu* found "deep conviction on the part of the people". "What would occur if something happened to your leader?" he asked a man, who did not look particularly educated. "There are ten ready to take up his place" was the quiet and reassuring reply.¹ But unfortunately that was not so. It was largely a one man's show. When Gopalakrishnayya was sent to jail, no other person came forward to take up his place, and as a result the movement collapsed.

Gopalakrishnayya was jailed in October 1921, when the movement was at its peak. In February 1922, a mob attacked the police station at Chauri Chaura, 15 miles from Gorakhpur and set fire to it. The policeman who were inside the station were roasted alive. Gandhi was taken aback at the outburst of violence, and he suspended the non-cooperation movement. The withdrawal of the movement resulted in a great slump of political activity throughout the country, and Chirala was no exception. With Gopalakrishnayya's imprisonment in October 1921 and the withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement throughout the country in February 1922, the struggle of the people of Chirala-Perala became weakened, and it slowly died. The people returned to their hearths and homes, which they had abandoned eleven months ago.

1. D.S.R. Rao's article "Chirala and self-determination" in *The Hindu* [Madras dated May 27, 1921.

CHIRALA-PERALA MOVEMENT VIS-A-VIS INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Now the question arises whether the movement was a total failure or whether the national movement for independence gained anything from this experience. It should be noted that for full eleven months there was no municipality in Chirala - Peralā. Gopalakrishnayya organised a parallel government in Ramnagar. Dr. B. S. L. Hanumantharao remarks, "Ramnagar looked like a self-governing island in the ocean of British imperialism".¹ In the history of the Indian national movement it is hard to recall any other episode when people in such large numbers evacuated their places of residence, raised a new township, ran a parallel government and defied the might of the British for full eleven months. A movement of this kind had never been attempted before anywhere; it was a pioneering and in a sense revolutionary concept. The Chirala-Peralā movement anticipated the far greater mass movements later under Gandhi. That itself was a mighty achievement.

Chirala-Peralā became house-hold names throughout the country during the non-cooperation movement. It was the hour of glory for the Guntur district. Movements of this type were the great rehearsals for the attainment of *Swaraj* and that of Chirala-Peralā should be ranked as one of the foremost of them.

The Chirala-Peralā struggle ripened the experience of the people of Andhra in general and Guntur district in particular. It threw the Guntur district into a ferment. As Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau remarks, "Under this inspiration, whole areas began to prepare themself-

1, Dr. B S L Hanumantharao : Guntur through Ages (Brochure issued by the A. I. C. C. during its session in Nehrunagar, Guntur on November 7, 8, 9, 1964.) p. 39,

ves for mass civil revolt, including the non-payment of Governmental revenues."¹

The simple village folk of Chirala-Perala showed their determination for full eleven months "not to be ruled against their will. Chirala is only an index of what India may do when she realises her plight and makes up her mind to act. This heroism does indeed deserve the admiration of those, whose goal is *Swaraj* and whose watch-word is 'non-violent non-cooperation'.²

1. Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau ; Op. cit, p. 179,

2' D. S. R. Rao's article "Chirala and self-determination" in The Hinnu (Madras) dated May 27, 1921.

Palnad Forest Satyagraha

ECONOMIC BACKWARDNESS OF PALNAD

In the Palnad *talug* of Guntur district the non-cooperation movement manifested itself in the defiance of forest regulations. The talug though "traditionally known as the land of heroes"¹ remained economically stagnant under the British administration. The system of communications was primitive. The railways did not yet reach Palnad, and people had to trek twenty five to thirty miles to take a train.² The land was parched, and

1. M Venkatarangaiya : Op. cit. Vol-III, p. 36.

2. Dandu Narayanaraju, C. V. Rangam Sresti and Gonuguntla Venkata Subrahmanyam ; Palnati Durantamulu. Andhra Rastra Jateeyopa Sangha Niyamita Vicharana Sangha Sabhyula Nivedika [Place of publication not mentioned, 1923] [Telugu], p. 10.

Enquiry Commission Report submitted by Dandu Narayanaraju, C. V. Rangam Sresti and Gonuguntla Venkata Subrahmanyam on the atrocities committed by the government in Palnad. Hereafter this report is referred to as 'Three

M ember Palnad Enquiry Commission Report.'

irrigation facilities were few. Most of the land was unfit for agriculture. Heaps of stones and pebbles were the scenes that came strikingly to sight to persons from the delta regions. Agriculture was confined to small areas around tanks. So even this was dependent upon the vagaries of weather. In 1919, 1920 and 21, when rains failed, the people were subjected to severe economic hardship. They subsisted on leaves, roots, bark, and jungle berries¹. Conditions did not improve much since the times of Poet Srinatha, who described Palnad as the land of small stones and little temples, scorpions and snakes.²

In this land of limited agriculture and practically no manufacture or industry, people took to rearing of cattle. Fodder was no problem, as the place abounded in forests. Though not dense or extensive, the forests provided ample fodder for the cattle. But most of them were declared 'Reserves' by the government, which levied exorbitant grazing tax called *Pullari*³. As David Washbrook observes, "From its creation in 1878 the forest department sought to control the use made of jungles and lands unfit for cultivation. This meant that it restricted access to land from which ryots traditionally obtained grazing for their cattle, crude fertilisers, firewood and various food stuffs Relations between the forest department and the ryots under its jurisdiction were always strained."⁴ Legislative Councillors from the dry districts, such as P. Kesavapillai, continually pressed Fort St. George to reform forest administration,⁵ but it was of no avail.

1. Ibid. p. 11.

Madala Veerabhadrarao also refers to the failure of rains during this period and the resultant economic hardship of the people.

See his *Desabhakta Jeevita Charitra* [Machilipatnam, 1966] [Telugu] pp. 81, 82

2. Three Member Palnad Enquiry Commission Report, p. 11.

3. Ibid. pp. 11, 12.

4. John Gallagher, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal: Op. cit. p. 184.

5. Ibid.

IMPACT OF NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT

The result was confrontation between the people on one side and the forest administration and the police on the other. Especially after the Nagpur Congress, the people of Palnad became extremely defiant of the government.¹ Goli Mallikarjuna Sastry carried the gospel of non-violent non-cooperation movement to the four corners of Palnad.² In the Mutukur village under the leadership of a person called "China Gandhi" people organised themselves to defy the government.³ Ranga Chenchayya, a Vysya, did intensive propaganda and made social boycott of the government officials a success.⁴ In Rentachintala, Nalam Mattupalli Sresti did Congress propaganda.⁵ The Guntur District Congress Committee also evinced keen interest in the forest affairs of Palnad. In its General Body meeting held on November 10, 1921, Anche Sivayya Chowdary presiding, it was resolved, that the defiance of forest laws in Palnad should henceforth be conducted under the auspices of the Congress.⁶ The executive of the Guntur D. C. C. meeting on November 14, 1921 resolved to start *panchayats* in Palnad to prepare the people for civil disobedience and send thirty enthusiastic people to do Congress propaganda. Goli Mallikarjuna Sastry as an observer took part in the deliberations.⁷ The Palnad Conference was held on August 15, 16, and 17, 1921 at Karampudi. Thousands from all

1. Three Member Palnadu Enquiry Commission Report, p. 12.

2. Gadde Rangaiah Naidu : Palnadu Duranta Vicharanopa Sangha Nivedika [Place and year of publication not mentioned] [Telugu], p. 12.

Enquiry Commission Report submitted by Gadde Rangaiah Naidu on the atrocities committed by the government in Palnad, Hereafter this report is referred to as Single Member Palnad Enquiry Commission Report

3. Three Member Palnad Enquiry Commission Report. p. 13

4. Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit. p. 231.

5. Single Member Palnad Enquiry Commission Report. p. 3.

6. The General Body meeting resolutions of the D.C.C., Guntur, held on October 10, 1921 are available in Saraswathiniketan, Vetapalem Guntur District

7. The Executive Committee meeting resolutions of D.C.C., Guntur held on November 14 1921 are available in Saraswathiniketan, Vetapalem, Guntur District.

villages assembled to hear the leaders and obtain advice regarding their confrontation with the government. The villagers were prepared to graze cattle in the forest without paying grazing fee, thus inaugurating civil disobedience. Social boycott of the government officials was ultimately decided.¹

The government itself accepted that the cause of trouble in Palnad were unfavourable season, great shortage of fodder and water, strict enforcement of forest rules and the non-co-operation agitation.²

REGOROUS IMPLEMENTATION OF FOREST REGULATIONS

With the rising tide of non-co-operation in the district the government was determined to implement forest regulations rigorously in Palnad. In the 'Reserves' a grazing tax of Re. 0-12-0 (Re. 0.75) on each cow and Re. 1-8-0 (Re. 1.50) on each buffalo for every six months was imposed. The goats were declared as enemies of the forest and they were not permitted to enter them.³ Any person found in the forest without a permit was prosecuted.⁴

1. The Hindu dated August 22, 1921.

2. Robertson, District Collector. Guntur to Marjoribanks, Acting Chief Secretary, Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras dated June 17, 1921.

(Andhra Pradesh State Archives, Hyderabad, History of the Freedom Struggle Section. The letters of the District Collectors to their superiors in the Fort St. George, Madras do not contain any serial number of the State Archives. They are arranged in the files date-wise in the History of the Freedom Struggle Section. The source of such letters is hereafter referred to as A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

3. Unnava Lakshminarayana and Madabhushi Vedantam Narasimhacharyulu: Palnati Adavi Ibbandulu. Place and year of Publication not mentioned) (Telugu), p. 3

(Enquiry Commission Report submitted to the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee on the grievances of the people of Palnad)

4. Ibid.

In Julakallu and Kallagunta people could not pay grazing tax, and they had to sell their cattle at cheap rates. As they had no other occupation, they were reduced to utter poverty and begging. The forest officials were mostly corrupt. The villagers of Wutacherla had to spend most of their income towards bribing the officers and also towards fees to the lawyers to wriggle themselves out of the prosecution cases which the police brought against them.¹ On February 16 and 17, 1922 the revenue authorities, accompanied by the police constables, went to Ramapuram and Jangameswarapuram and insisted upon the people paying taxes of three instalments within twelve hours. When the villagers pleaded helplessness and requested for more time, the *Tahasildar* indulged in foul language and threatened the people with dire consequences.² In Jattipalem, the people were denied access to water in the forest stream. When their cattle were drinking water, they were impounded by the forest authorities.³ When the villagers of Jangameswarapuram, Ramapuram, Jettipalem and Minchalapadu were unable to pay grazing tax, the Collector of Guntur proceeded to these villages with Armed Reserve and Mounted Police in February 1921 and distrained their cattle in very large numbers.⁴

SOCIAL BOYCOTT OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

With the government attitude towards grazing tax becoming stiff the people decided upon social boycott of not only forest officials but also of revenue officials. The Deputy *Tahsildar* in Macherla could not obtain milk for his children. When the District Collector of Guntur camped at the outskirts of Macherla, his peons could

1. Ibid. pp. 2, 3.

2. Three Member Palnad Enquiry Commission Report. pp. 14, 15

3. Ibid p. 16.

4. Single Member Palnad Enquiry Commission Report. p. 2.

not secure eggs for him, and they had to get them from Guntur. When the Collector wanted to make his orders known by the beat of drums, the village *Munsiff* made the submission that all the drums in the villages were either damaged or out of order.¹ The Deputy Tahsildar Ponnada Rama Koteswararao, tried his best to secure coffee for the Collector but all his attempts proved futile. The forest and revenue officials could not secure food anywhere in Macherla as the hoteliers refused to serve them. The revenue officers could not secure carts to carry their effects back to Guntur. In the beginning the social boycott was confined only to the forest officials, but as the revenue officials secretly passed on some of their supplies to the forest officials, the people extended social boycott to the revenue officials also.² The social boycott became such a great success that the District Collector, Guntur, had to ruefully report to his superiors in the Fort. St. George that "It was impossible to get either supplies or 'Bundies' either for the Collector or for the District Superintendent of Police".³

THE P.C.C. DEPUTES LAKSHMINARAYANA AND NARASIMHACHARYULU TO PALNAD

The situation became grave with the passing of every day. The people resorted to withholding of the grazing tax. The Andhra Provincial Congress Committee met in July 1921 in Venkatagiri at the residence of the prominent Congress leaders Katikineni Venkata Ramarao and Kalyanarao to take stock of the situation in Palnad.

1. Konda Venkatappayya. Op. cit. pp. 231, 232.

2. Unnava Lakshminarayana and Madabhushi Vedantam Narasimhacharyulu, Op. cit. pp. 6, 7.

3. District Collector, Guntur to R. A. Graham, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras dated February 25, 1922. (A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

The Andhra Provincial Congress Committee resolved to depute Unnava Lakshminarayana and Madabhushi Vedantam Narasimhacharyulu to make an on-the-spot study and submit a report to it.¹

In pursuance of this resolution of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee Unnava Lakshminarayana and Madabhushi Vedantam Narasimhacharyulu visited Karem-pudi, Guttikonda and Julakallu on 17th July and enquired about the difficulties of the people of these places.² Later Lakshminarayana proceeded to Macherla. As the District Collector, Guntur was camping at Macherla then, Lakshminarayana thought it proper to represent the long-standing demands of the people of Palnad to him. He represented to the Collector that 1) half of the forest should be declared reserved forest and the other half unreserved, 2) the rates of the grazing tax should be reduced, 3) the ryots should be allowed to cut wood in the forest for agricultural implements, 4) head-loads of fodder should be allowed to be taken out of the forest after obtaining permits, 5) people should be permitted to collect leaves, 6) with the payment of one instalment of taxes the cattle should be allowed to graze anywhere in the forest of the district for one full year, 7) forest lands fit for agriculture should be allotted to the ryots on application and 8) if the cattle were found grazing without the payment of taxes in the 'Reserves' they should be impounded, but compound fees should not be collected from their owners.³ But the Collector

1. Ayyadevara Kaleswararao: Op. cit. p. 336.

Konda Venkatappayya also refers to this. See his autobiography Sweeya Charitra pp. 230, 231.

Katikineni Venkata Ramarao and Kalyanrao famous then in Andhra political circles as Katikineni Brothers were the sons of Vijaramayya. They were closely related to the Venkatagiri Zamindar, a loyalist. See Guddeti Veera Subrahmanyam's Satyagraha Samara Charitra (Gudur, 1956) (Telugu), pp. 104, 105.

2. Unnava Lakshminarayana and Madabhushi Vedantam Narasimhacharyulu. Op. cit. p. 1.

3. Ibid pp. 5, 6.

replied that the government would not change any forest rules, and if the ryots would abuse or manhandle forest and revenue officials or cut their supplies, he would bring in Armed Police, and collect punitive tax. This attitude of the Collector greatly disappointed the people.¹

When talks between Lakshminarayana and the Collector failed, social boycott against forest officers was organised more vigorously in Macherla and the surrounding villages. In fact, the presence of Lakshminarayana and Narasimhacharyulu, the two popular leaders of the Guntur district, added high-octane fuel to the flames of protest that were engulfing Palnad. The Muslims also began to take part enthusiastically in the social boycott of the government officials. On July 21st when two forest-guards were taking food secretly in a house in Kothapalli, a village near Macherla, three Muslims namely Nabi Saheb, Chintapalli Hussain Saheb and John Ahmed entered the house and threw the guards out when they were half-way through their meal. On the next day (22nd July) the three Muslims were tried under Sections 352, 452 Cr. P. C. (Assault, Trespass) and convicted to two months imprisonment under the first section and six months under the second section.²

IMPRISONMENT OF LAKSHMINARAYANA AND NARASIMHACHARYULU

When the trial of the Muslim leaders was going on, the police served a notice on Unnave Lakshminarayana under Section 107. Since Madabhushi Vedantam Nara-

1. Ibid. pp. 6, 7.

2. Ibid. pp. 9, 10.

simhacharyulu was away on tour in other villages, a similar notice could not be served on him immediately. Later both of them were tried on charges of inciting the people of Palnad to defy forest laws, organising social boycott of revenue and forest officials and acting in such a way as to create law and order problem.

Lakshminarayana was taken to the Magistrate's Court in procession on horse-back to the beat of drums, the very drums which the Collector could not secure anywhere in Macherla to make his orders known to the people. When the Collector saw the enthusiasm of the people and their respect for Lakshminarayana, he remarked to those around him: "They say that *Swaraj* would come some day, but now I see *Swaraj* around me!"

As Lakshminarayana and Narasimhacharyulu refused to execute a bond and give security, both of them were convicted to one year simple imprisonment.²

On the imprisonment of Lakshminarayana and Narasimhacharyulu, *Krishna Patrika* wrote: "The Collector after a trial of five minutes gave them each one year simple imprisonment. The fire of fury kindled in the people of Palnad by the imprisonment of these two patriots defies description. Who can say that, if they had not previously enjoined Mahatma Gandhi's 'Ahimsa' on the people, the pure waters of Chandravanka, which was flowing by, would not have become purple? These heroes of Palnad shed lustre on the non co-operation movement

1. Konda Venkatappaiah: Op. cit. p. 232

2. Unnava Lakshminarayana and Madabhushi Vedantam Narasimhacharyulu Op. cit. pp. 10, 11.

Konda Venkatappayya also refers to the trial and imprisonment of the two leaders. See his *Sweeya Charitra*, p. 233. Most of these points are corroborated by

Ayyadevara Kaleswararao. See his *Na Jeevitha Katha*, Navyandhramau, p. 6

by their patience and self-control".¹ News of the imprisonment of the two leaders reached other parts of the Guntur district, and protest meetings were held at many places. Narasaraopet observed a complete *hartal*. Pleaders did not attend the courts. The officials tried their best to induce the shop-keepers to end the *hartal*, but everywhere they met with the determined reply: "Release our leaders".² In Bapatla vakils boycotted courts. All shops were closed. In Ongole courts wore a deserted look. Complete *hartal* was observed.³

In Guntur town the *hartal* was observed for six days from 24th July.⁴ Konda Venkatappaya, Gollapudi Sitarاما Sastry, Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya, Chatti Narasimharao, N. V. L. Narasimha Rao, Barrister Gupta, Maddi Venkata Subbayya and Chimakurthi Basavayya went round the town daily for six days and saw to it that the town observed complete *hartal*. All educational institutions, shops and factories were closed. The Collector and the District Superintendent of Police exerted all their power and influence to break the spirit of the people, but their efforts did not fructify.⁵ "Such a thing was not known to the people till then. It stupefied all government officials."⁶

On 29th July there were violent incidents in the Guntur town. When Bhattiprolu Surya Prakasarao was calling students out of the Town High School, the Sub-

1. Krishna Patrika dated August 6, 1921.

2. The Hindu dated July 28, 1921.

3. The Hindu dated July 30, 1921.

4. The Hindu dated July 30, 1921.

5. Konda Venkatappaya : Op. cit. p. 237.

6. Ibid. pp. 235, 236.

The Hindu dated July 30, 1921 writes: "for organisation, orderliness and duration the hartal is unprecedented".

Inspector of Police Subbayya Naidu arrested him.¹ When several young boys followed Surya Prakasarao to the police station the Sub-Inspector of Police whipped them. Some young boys sustained serious injuries.² When tempers were rising high, the Deputy Collector, Gundurao, arrived at the High School in a horse-driven cart. The presence of the Deputy Collector incensed the people who threw mud clods and small stones at him.³ Konda Venkatappayya appeared on the scene and did all he could to disperse the crowd peacefully.⁴ As he stood between the crowd and the Deputy Collector's cart, some of the stones hit him, and he sustained bleeding injuries on his fingers.⁵ But for Konda Venkatappayya, Deputy Collector Gundurao might have been seriously injured. In spite of this the Deputy Collector wrote to the District Collector a report that Konda Venkatappayya was responsible for all the violent incidents of the day, and on the basis of this report Venkatappayya was arrested along with Maddi Venkata Subbayya, Chimakurthy Ramaswamy and Barrister Gupta.⁶

The arrest of Konda Venkatappayya and other leaders created tremendous indignation among the people of the Guntur district. Many lawyers gave up their practice. The clerks of the Collectorate decided to resign their jobs immediately after taking their salary for the month of July 1921.⁷ Many news-papers in the country condemned the arrest of Konda Venkatappayya. *Krishna Patrika* in a long article under the heading 'The rise of

1. Hindu dated July 30, 1921.

2. The Hindu dated July 30, 1921.

3. Konda Venkatappayya: Op. cit. p. 238.

4. The Hindu dated July 30, 1921.

5. Konda Venkatappayya: Op. cit. p. 239.

6. Ibid p. 243.

7. Ayyadevara Kaleswararao Op. cit. p. 338.

popular power in the Guntur district' wrote: "Gundurao shamelessly swore and deposed in the public court that Konda Venkatappayya, who had saved him from danger and his wife from widowhood, got a crowd to throw stones at him..... What remains to be said? The whole of the Andhra Country was in great commotion.... The people began to say that war had broken out. For those four forty thousand were offering to go to the jail... Section 107 which was intended for bad characters, *badmashes* and rowdies was applied to Venkatappayya Panthulu, who was venerable and like a saint. Thirty six lawyers gave up their profession. Well done, Guntur: From now on courts of justice have become dark cells.... When courage, hope and daring spring up in the hearts of the people, instead of despire, on the arrest and imprisonment of innocent patriots, one need not hesitate to say that *Swaraj* has been established".¹

The news of the arrest of Konda Venkatappayya reached Gandhi who exclaimed: "I wish he was shot down"² Ayyadevara Kaleswararao says that Gandhi's opinion was that with the supreme self-sacrifice of Konda Venkatappayya there would be unparalleled political awakening in Andhra Desa to fight for national freedom.³

The collector sensed the tension created in the whole of Guntur district on the arrest of Konda Venkatappayya. During Venkatappayya's trial thousands of people thro-

1. Krishna Patrika dated August 6, 1921.

2. Ayyadevara Kaleswararao Op cit. p. 338.

Konda Venkatappayya writes that Gandhi made this remark during the A.I.C.C. meeting in Bombay. Tanguturi Prakasam who was present at the meeting later informed Venkatappayya about this.

See Konda Venkatappayya's *Sweeya Charitra*, p. 245.

3. Ayyadevara Kaleswararao. Op. cit. p. 338.

nged the court precincts. The government had to bring in additional police even from far-off places like Visakhapatnam. After a trial of two days Venkatappayya was acquitted. The Colloctor in his judgement felt that Venkatappayya and others that were arrested along with him did not conduct themselves in any way prejudicial to the maintenance of law and order¹.

During the *hartal* following the arrest of Unnava Lakshminarayana and Madabhushi Vedantam Narasimhacharyulu and during the commotion caused by the arrest of Konda Venkatappayya, Unnava Lakshmibayamma wife of Lakshminarayana took an active part. Lakshmibayamma and Yamini Purna Tilakam[†] led processions of ladies, held protest meetings in Guntur and collected large amounts of money towards the Tilak Swaraj Fund². She went to distant places like Visakhapatnam and Vijayanagaram, distributed Gandhi caps among the students there and was responsible for many students quitting government educational institutions.³ During the jail term of one year of her husband, Lakshmibayamma toured extensively and carried on intensive Congress propaganda.⁴

NO-TAX CAMPAIGN

The imprisonment of the three Muslims viz. Nabi Saheb, Chintapalli Hussain Saheb and John Ahmed and the sentence of one year simple imprisonment passed on

1. Konda Venkatappayya Op. cit. p. 245.

[†] Yamini Purna Tilakam belonged to the Devadasi community. Devadasis were professional dancing girls. In 1919 Yamini Purna Tilakam became a disciple of Gandhi, participated in the national movement and went to jail several times. Working closely with Darsi Chenchayya and Yarramilli Narayana Murthy Panthulu, she arranged marriages for dancing girls and did good work for their social upliftment. See Darsi Chenchayya's Na Divya Smruthulu (Vijayawada, 1961) (Telugu), pp. 78 to 83.

2. The Hindu dated July 30, 1921.

3. Ayyadevara Kaleswararao: Op. cit. p. 337.

4. Kanuparthi Varalakshamma: Op. cit. p. 33.

Unnava Lakshminarayana and Madabhushi Vedantam Narasimhacharyulu infuriated the people. They practically launched a no-tax campaign by sending their cattle into the reserved forests without paying the usual *Pullari*. Many clashes occurred between the people on one side and the police and the forest officials on the other. When the cattle was impounded, the people overpowered the police and rescued their cattle. The inhabitants of Jattipalem forcibly rescued from the pound over a hundred cattle which had been found grazing without permits and had been impounded by the Forest Department.¹ In Mutukur the people came frequently into clashes with forest officials. Forest rules were constantly defied by the inhabitants of this village.² In Jangameswarapuram a person who had been arrested under Section 188 Cr.P.C. was forcibly rescued by the villagers.³ The condition of Palnad created a great problem to the government, and the District Collector conceded that in Palnad "Several villages have proclaimed *Swaraj*".⁴

MINCHALAPADU INCIDENT

But the most serious confrontation between the people and the government occurred on February 26, 1921 in Minchalapadu, which was a hamlet of Kolagutla village.⁵ The people of this village were of Telega, Golla, Odiga and Harijan castes, Telega being the domi-

1. District Collector, Guntur to R. A. Graham, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St George, Madras dated February 25, 1922.
(A. P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Guntur District Collector's D.O. No. 1 to R.A. Graham, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras dated February 14, 1922.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

5. Guntur District Collector's D.O. No. 15 to R.A. Graham, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras dated February 27, 1922.
(A.P. State archives H.F.S. Section)

nant caste. Their main occupations were agriculture and cattle rearing.¹ There were so many cases of people rescuing their cattle seized by the Forest Department that the forest officials expressed their complete helplessness to deal with the situation.² So a party of Reserve Police consisting of twenty men and two Head Constables under a Sub-Inspector, G. V. Raghavayya, were sent to standby the forest officials. The forest party found one hundred and twenty buffaloes and fifty goats in the reserve forest to the south of Minchalapadu, and intended to drive them to the Mutukur pound. They arrested two grazers and a woman who were in charge of the cattle. But as the party was passing Minchalapadu with the cattle the villagers stopped it and rescued one arrested person and thirty buffaloes. They also succeeded in driving away all the goats.³ At this stage the *Karanam* of Kolagutla of which Minchalapadu was the hamlet persuaded the villagers to withdraw from the scene and stop their attempts to rescue their distrained cattle. According to the Collector of Guntur, H. A. B. Vernon, the people regrouped and attacked the government party with greater force. About two to three hundred people including women began pelting stones. The government version runs thus: "As this particular localityabounds in sharp stones, which are very dangerous missiles and as the Sub-Inspector.....was of opinion that the situation was becoming serious, he drew up the Reserve Police in line with the cattle and the forest officers behind them and ordered them to fix bayonets for 'mob firing', and all to load with buckshot. He then warned the crowds three times in an audible manner to disperse, as they were an unlawful

1. Single Member Palnad Enquiry Commission Report, p. 11.

2. H. A. B. Vernon, District Collector, Guntur to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras dated March 1, 1922.
(A. P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

3. Ibid.

assembly, and warned them that he would fire. As this had no effect on the mob who persisted in their assault, the Sub-Inspector ordered the Reserve to fire a volley and one man was observed to fall. The mob, however, did not disperse and still kept on pelting the police with stones. The Sub-Inspector therefore ordered six constables to load with ball and the remainder with buckshot and ordered the six men who had loaded the ball to fire a volley. As a result of this two more men were observed to fall, and the mob ran away. This occurrence took place between 4 and 5 in the after-noon".¹

The first man to fall at the police firing was Kanne-ganti Hanumanthu. The second who fell dead was Ellampally Seshudu, agricultural labourer and servant of Hanumanthu. The third casualty was the syce of the Sub-Inspector of Police.²

When the news was communicated to the District Collector, H A.B.Vernon, he proceeded to Minchalapadu between 3 and 4 in the morning of February 27, 1922, accompanied by the District Superintendent of Police, District Forest Officer, Captain Machonochie and the Military force. The village was surrounded and an identification parade was held. Twenty eight men and nine women were identified as having taken part in the affray. They were arrested.³

A. P. C. C. SETS UP ENQUIRY COMMITTEES

The Andhra Provincial Congress Committee was much agitated over the events in Palnad in general and

1. H A.B Vernon District Collector, Guntur to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras dated March 1, 1922.

A.P. State Archives, H F S. Section

2. Single Member Palnad Enquiry Commission Report, p. 16.

3. H.A B. Vernon, District Collector Guntur to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St George, Madras dated March 1, 1922.

(A.P. State Archives, H F.S. Section)

Minchalapadu in particular. The Andhra P. C. C. meeting in Guntur on April 30, 1922 constituted a sub-committee with Panguluri Venkata Subbarao and S. Srinivas Iyengar to make an enquiry into the police firing of Minchalapadu. But the sub-committee constituted, however, could not go to Palnad. So the P. C. C. at its meeting in Tirupati on July 22, 1922 set up another sub-committee with Dr. Dharvada Ramachandrarao and Gadde Rangayya Naidu to enquire into the police firing. Since Dharvada Ramachandrarao could not go to Palnad, Gadde Rangayya Naidu alone proceeded there in the last week of October 1922, conducted enquiry in Minchalapadu and submitted a report to Tanguturi Prakasam, President, Andhra Provincial Congress Committee.¹

Gadde Rangayya Naidu visited only Minchalapadu, and so the Andhra Congress Committee felt that the report submitted by him was not comprehensive. It constituted another sub-committee on June 14th, 1923 with Dandu Narayanaraju, C. V. Rangam Sresthi, Gonuguntla Subrahmanyam and Kanneganti Suryanarayana Chowdary. Since Suryanarayana Chowdary could not make himself available to go to Palnad, the other three members of the sub-committee toured Palnad, between June 21st and 26th and submitted a report to Tanguturi Prakasam, President, Andhra Provincial Congress Committee on September 6, 1923.²

Both the enquiry committees squarely found fault with the police for the incident of 26th February 1922. Gadde Rangayya Naidu says that when the cattle was distrained there was altercation between the police and Pasupuleti Chennayya, son-in-law of Hanumanthu in

1. Single Member Palnad Enquiry Commission Report. pp. 2, 4.
2. Three Member Palnad Enquiry Commission Report p. 2.

which a police constable beat Chennayya with the butt-end of his gun. A woman then ran into the village and informed Hanumanthu that his son-in-law was being killed by the police. Hanumanthu then ran to the scene of fracas. Police, thereupon, fired at him, and felled him. Though fallen to the ground wounded, Hanumanthu was alive, but the police fired at him a second time. The second firing also did not take away his life. Hanumanthu became delirious and cried for water.¹ Neither the police brought him water, nor allowed any villager to do so. The firing took place at six in the evening and Hanumanthu died at twelve in the night.² The Three Member Palnad Enquiry Commission also corroborates this.³ Gadde Rangayya Naidu personally interviewed Kanneganti Gangamma, wife of Hanumanthu, Miryala Pitchamma, Hanumanthu's daughter, Pasupuleti Chennayya, Hanumanthu's son-in-law, and five other villagers of Minchalapadu - Miryala Pitchayya, Nallabothula Yellakondayya, Kanneganti Nagayya, Kanneganti Venkayya and Beerneedu Rosigadu on October 27, 1922. All said in one voice that the police did not make any attempt to give medical aid to Hanumanthu who was alive many hours after the shoot-out. None was allowed to bring him water when he cried for it deliriously.

That the police made indiscriminate firing was evident by the death of the syce of the Sub-Inspector. The Collector reported, "It cannot be stated with certainty how he came to be in the line of fire, but it is known that the horse of the Sub-Inspector broke away and he probably ran towards the crowd in order to catch it."⁴ But the Collector stated earlier that the

1. Single Member Palnad Inquiry Commission Report. pp. 15, 16

2. Ibid.

3. Three Member Palnad Enquiry Commission Report. p. 17.

4. H.A.B Vernon District Collector, Guntur to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras dated March 1, 1922.
(A.P. State Archives II F.S. Section)

Sub-Inspector gave sufficient time for the mob to disperse. But could he not wait till his own syce returned with the horse which had broken loose and ran towards the mob?

GOVERNMENT MOUNTS UP PRESSURE

The next morning the Collector and the District Superintendent of Police accompanied by the military surrounded the village to make arrests. All male population was taken out of the village. Then some police people entered the houses of the villagers and carried with them whatever they found there - cash, jewels, clothes etc. Even ghee and rice were not left behind. Kanneganti Gangamma reported loss of articles worth Rs. 100/-.² The Mounted Police terrorised the people who were subjected to all sorts of atrocities. Most of the female members of the village sought refuge in the jungles to spare themselves from the ire of the police. Those that could not escape were treated with the butt-ends of the guns, and their feet were crushed under the jack-boots. The women were subjected to every humiliation.³

Some of the Government officials themselves were taken aback at the atrocities of the police and the military, and reported the matter orally to the District Collector, Vernon. Instead of bringing the guilty to book, the Collector replied: "They came here only for this purpose".⁴ In a manner highly reminiscent of the Hunter Committee findings on the Jallianwalabagh

1. Single Member Palnad Enquiry Commission Report, p. 22.

2. Ibid. p. 26

3. Three Member Palnad Enquiry Commission Report, p. 25.

4. Ibid. p. 28

massacre, Collector Vernon exonerated the Sub-Inspector of Police for the shooting order. The Collector wrote to his superiors in the Fort St. George : "I am of opinion that the Sub-Inspector carried out his duty with bravery and discretion; that he refrained from firing until the last possible moment and when he did fire, did not continue longer than was absolutely necessary".¹

Later, the government made large scale arrests. The arrested were lodged in Macherla sub-jail for two months and Narasaraopet sub-jail for another two months. They were later brought to trial in the court of Deputy Collector Jambunatha Iyer. Kanneganti Nagayya, Nallabothula Venkayya, Enugula China Narasayya, Miryala Narasayya, Miryala China Krishnamma, Miryala Pitchayya, Nallabothula Yellakondayya, Enugula Vee-rayya, Kanneganti Venkatayya, Oddi Venkataswamygadu, Kosani Kotayya, Kandarapu Venkatesugadu, Kandarapu Gurivigadu, Beerneedu Rosigadu, Beerneedu Yellamanda and Beerneedu Venkatesamgadu were convicted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment ranging from one month to one year. Seven women - Polapula Kotamma, Miryala Mangamma, Yerragorla Balamma, Kota Aude-mma, Enugula Ramamma, Miryala Kotamma and Konda Venkamma were fined Rs. 75/- each. Even young children, Miryala Chinnayya aged sixteen years and Miryala Bangarayya aged ten years, were fined Rs. 75/- each. China Ammigadu, another boy of very young age, was sentenced to one and half months imprisonment.²

After the autopsy was conducted Hanumanthu's body was buried on the outskirts of Kolagutla village on 27th February, 1922. Four days later it was exhumed

1 H.A.B, Vernon, District Collector, Guntur to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras dated March 1, 1922.

(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

2 Single Member Palnad Enquiry Commission Report. pp. 23, 24.

by the members of Hanumanthu's family and after religious rites was buried in Kolagutla village near the banks of the stream Dantaiavagu, fifteen yards away from the Local Fund Road.¹ A memorial inscription on stone was raised at the grave. It ran as follows: "On Vijayabhyudaya Salivahana Saka 1844, i. e., on 26-2-'22 which is equivalent of the year Durmatinama, month Makha, *tidhi* 30 at 12 A. M. the District Collector of Guntur, Vernon, determined to crush non-cooperation movement arrived in Palnad taluq and sent the Sub-Inspector of Durgi, Raghavayya Naidu, with military to Minchalapadu hamlet of Kolagutla to impound the cattle of people who did not pay grazing tax. There was altercation between the officers and Kanneganti Hanumanthu. Thereupon, the police fired at him and twenty six pellets were lodged in his body. Later, after a wordy duel he died at 12 in the night".² This inscription was raised by Atmakuri Punnayya on the explicit wishes of Hanumanthu's wife.³

The contents of the inscription were published in the *Guntur Patrika* and received wide publicity. The government thought that the tablet would be a standing monument of defiance of authority. Through the *Karnam* of Kolagutla, the government got it removed to the house of Hanumanthu's wife. Later, on January 22, 1923 revenue officers appeared at the house, broke the tablet into pieces and got them scattered in the shrubs in which this village abounded.⁴

The Andhra Provincial Congress Committee meeting in Cocanada on December 16, 1923 condemned "the unjust conduct of the British officials who during the

1. Ibid pp 13, 14.

2. Quoted in the Single Member Palnad Enquiry Commission Report p 23.

3. Three Member Palnad Enquiry Commission Report p. 19.

4. Ibid. p. 34.

height of nonco-operation in Andhra Desa cruelly shot dead Kanneganti Hanumanthu of Minchalapadu in the Palnad taluq, Guntur District on the ground that forest dues were not paid up''. It conveyed its sorrow to the members of his family. Regarding the destruction of the memorial inscription the P. C. C. passed the following resolution proposed by Gadde Rangayya Naidu : "The conference condemns the perverse act of certain other officers who destroyed the tablet erected at the site of Hanumanthu's tomb by his wife and other relation describing how his life came to end and resolves the tablet be put in again writing thereon the further conduct of the destroyers and that for this purpose calls upon the Provincial Congress Committee to make necessary arrangements risking satyagraha if it should become necessary in resetting the tablet''. The resolution was carried unanimously.¹ But nothing appears to have come out of this resolution. The newspapers, the government reports and the contemporary writings are silent about the issue.

COLLAPSE OF THE MOVEMENT

With the repression let loose by the government and with the withdrawal of the civil disobedience movement in other parts of the Guntur district, especially in Pedanandipadu, the Palnad Forest Satyagraha was considerably weakened. Slowly normalcy was restored. By March 4, 1922, the government in its communique issued for publicity could say that most of "the villagers are now paying up their grazing fees''.²

1. The Hindu dated December 18, 1923.

2. Communique for publicity issued by the Government of Madras, Fort St. George Madras dated March 4, 1922.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

No-tax Campaign

DELHI AND AHMADABAD CONGRESS RESOLUTIONS

Throughout the year 1921 the non-cooperation movement was in full swing. According to Pattabhi Sitaramayya, over twenty thousand individual civil resisters were in jail, and their number was soon to swell to thirty thousand.¹ Madala Veerabhadra Rao gives the names of more than a hundred who courted imprisonment during the non-cooperation movement in the Guntur district.² By the end of the year all the prominent national leaders save Gandhi were serving various terms of imprisonment. Gandhi had promised swaraj in one year, if his programme was adhered to, but the year was about to come to a close. It was in this tense atmosphere that the A. I. C. C. met at Delhi on 5th November. There for the first time the programme of a no-tax campaign was discussed. It authorised every province, on its own responsibility, to undertake mass civil disobedience including non-pay-

1. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya: *Op. cit.* Vol-I, p. 223.

2. Madala Veerabhadrarao *Gunturu Zilla Swarajyodyamama 1920-21* Ujvala Ghattalu (Published by the author, 1974) (Telugu), pp. 173 to 185.

ment of taxes in the manner considered suitable by the Provincial Congress Committee subject to several conditions. The conditions were as follows: every individual civil resister must have fulfilled that part of the N. C. O. programme applicable to him, should know spinning, must have discarded foreign cloth and taken to *Khaddar*, must be a believer in Hindu-Muslim unity must believe in non-violence as absolutely essential for the redress of the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs and the attainment of *Swaraj*, and if a Hindu must by his personal conduct show that he regarded untouchability as a blot on the nation's life.¹ These conditions later became famous as Delhi conditions throughout the country. With regards to the mass civil disobedience the A. I. C. C. decided to treat a district or *Tahsil* as a unit. There the majority of the population should have complete faith in the principles of N. C. O.²

In the back-drop of large scale arrests, national yearning for *Swaraj* and the Delhi A. I. C. C. resolutions of 5th November, the annual session of the Congress was held in Ahmadabad towards the end of December 1921. C. R. Das was to have presided over the Congress. But due to his incarceration, *Hakim* Ajmal Khan of Delhi presided. The resolutions adopted at this session of the Congress were of very vital importance to the progress of non-cooperation movement. They³ run as follows:

“Whereas, since the holding of the last National Congress, the people of India have found from actual experience that by reason of the adoption of non-violent non-cooperation, the country has made great advance

1. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : Op. cit: Vol-I, p. 219.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid. pp. 224, 226.

in fearlessness, self-sacrifice and selfrespect, and whereas the movement has greatly damaged the prestige of the government, and whereas on the whole the country is rapidly progressing towards swaraj, this Congress confirms the resolutions adopted at the Special Session of the Congress at Calcutta and reaffirmed at Nagpur, and places on record the fixed determination of the Congress to continue the programme of non-violent non-cooperation with greater vigour than hitherto in such manner as each province may determine, till Punjab and Khilafat wrongs are redressed and swarajya is established and the control of the Government of India passes into the hands of the people from that of an irresponsible corporation".

"This Congress is further of opinion that civil disobedience is the only civilised and effective substitute for an armed rebellion whenever every other remedy for preventing arbitrary, tyrannical and emasculating use of authority by individuals or corporations has been tried, and therefore advises all Congress workers and others who believe in peaceful methods and are convinced that there is no remedy save some kind of sacrifice to dislodge the existing government from its position of perfect irresponsibility to the people of India, to organise individual civil disobedience and mass civil disobedience when the mass of the people have been sufficiently trained in the methods of non-violence and otherwise in terms of the resolution thereon of the last meeting held at Delhi".

The resolution appealed to "every person of the age of eighteen and over" to join the volunteer organisations.¹

2. Ibid. p. 226.

Another important feature of the Ahmadabad session of the Congress was that Gandhi visited each camp and explained the technique of civil disobedience.¹ In the Andhra camp Gandhi offered to answer questions of the delegates. Cheruvu Venkata Subrahmanya Sastry, delegate from Ongole, put the following question: "In the light of the non-cooperation programme inclusive of the refusal of the payment of taxes, and in view of the fact that the tax-collection commences in the Madras Presidency in the month of January, what advice do you give us in the matter of withholding of taxes with which we are going to be confirmed as soon as we reach home?" In reply Gandhi said that those places in which the people could be said to have fulfilled the Delhi A. I. C. C. conditions - Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability, propagation of Khadi and faith in non-violence - were eligible for taking up civil disobedience inclusive of withholding of taxes.²

GUNTUR DISTRICT FORGES AHEAD

Deriving inspiration from Gandhi's answer, the A. P. C. C. met at Bezawada on January 7, 1922 and decided that no-tax campaign as an integral part of civil disobedience movement should be carried on in the districts of Guntur, Godavari and Krishna. It also

1. Ibid. p 229.

2. Signed Statement of Cheruvu Venkata Subrahmanya Sastry, hereafter referred to as signed statement of C. V. S. Sastry. C. V. S. Sastry's Statement is corroborated by Ramachandruni Venkatappa. See Gundlupalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika, pp. 112-113. Konda Venkatappayya also writes of Gandhi's visit to the Andhra camp. See his Sweeya Charitra, p. 213. The Hindu dated December 30, 1921, Ahmadabad writes: "The Andhras seem to have taken very earnestly the question of civil disobedience this morning a crowded meeting of delegates and visitors was held in the Andhra camp with Gandhi in the chair to hear from him the practical methods of carrying on civil disobedience. One main question discussed was the non-payment of taxes since the time of the payment of taxes was approaching. Gandhi emphasised that non-payment was a privilege to be exercised only when all the remaining parts of the programme have been completely fulfilled".

resolved to give freedom to the District Congress Committees to decide which areas in their respective districts fulfilled the Delhi conditions to be eligible for launching mass civil disobedience.¹

In order to decide which areas of the Guntur district were eligible for no-tax campaign the Guntur District Congress Committee met at Ponnur on 12th January and resolved unanimously that land revenue for the January *Kist* should not be paid throughout the Guntur district except a few firkas in Tenali, Guntur, Ongole and Repalle taluqs.²

On the day the D. C. C. met at Ponnur the District Magistrate promulgated Section 144 Cr. P. C. by the beat of *tom-tom* and by affixing a copy of the order on a prominent place in Ponnur. About 4,000 people collected from different parts of the district. Gollapudi Sitaramasastry and Maddi Radhakrishnayya took prominent part. Gollapudi Sitaramasastry announced the resolve of the Committee to disobey the Magistrate's order. There was keen competition among the people to come forward and disobey the Magistrate's Order by making speeches and advocating non-payment of taxes. But, for the time-being the D. C. C. selected only ten persons to defy the Magistrate's Order on 12th January. They were Gollapudi Sitaramasastry, Maddi Radhakrishnayya, Unnava Lakshmibayamma, Md. Ghouse Beg, Patri Anantaraao, Mantina Nagaraju, Machiraju Ramamurthy, Itikala Suryanarayana, Kamaraju BhanumarthY and Saranu Ramaswamy Chowdary.³

1. Signed Statement of C.V.S. Sastri. See also Konda Venkatappayya's *Sweeya Charitra*. p. 286.

2. The Hindu dated January 15, 1922.

3. Personal Assistant of the District Superintendent of Police, Guntur to the District Collector and Magistrate, Guntur (Copy) dated January 12, 1922. (A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

Even before a formal consent of the D. C. C. was obtained Konda Venkatappayya, President of Andhra Provincial Congress Committee and Gollapudi Sitaramasastry its Secretary toured the villages in the Guntur district in the first days of December 1921 and prepared the people for no-tax campaign. They practically covered all the villages.¹

After the Ahmadabad Session considerable propaganda in favour of no tax campaign was done in the Ongole taluq. Responsibility of organising and conducting Congress affairs in the taluq mainly devolved on Dhara Gopala Sastry. Cheruvu Venkata Subrahmanya Sastry, Ramanayanam Lakshminarasimham, Kota Viswanadham, Chivukula Radhakrishnayya, Kappera Narasimham and Valluri Narayanarao made extensive tour of the Duddukur firka and carried the Ahmadabad resolutions of the Congress to the masses.²

But two events gave great impetus to the no-tax movement in the Guntur district. They were the resignations of the Village Officers and the formation of a volunteer corps called Peace Brigade, the *Santi Sena*.

RESIGNATION OF VILLAGE OFFICERS.

In the Pedanandipadu firka all the Village Officers of eighteen villages except one resigned.³ The leader of the movement was Machiraju Ramamurthy, the *Karnam* of Chandavolu. He was an enthusiastic non-cooperator.

1. Konda Venkatappayya: Op. cit. pp: 280, 281.

2. Signed statement of C.V.S. Sastri.

3. A. Galleti, District Collector, Guntur to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras dated January 8, 1922.
(A. P. State Archives H.F.S. Section)

He and Parvataneni Veerayya Chowdary who spearheaded no-tax movement in Pedanandipadu firka toured villages and were responsible for the wholesale resignations of the village officers in Pedanandipadu firka of the Bapatla talup.¹ In the Duddukur firka of Ongole taluq many village Officers tendered their resignations. Among them Rachapudi Govardhanarao, of Rachapudi, Abbaraju Subbarayudu of Koniki and Tammavarapu Lakshminarayana of Tammavaram were enthusiastic non-cooperators.² Duddukuru Sri Krishnamurthy, Karnam of Duddukur was warned by Akbar Hydari, Sub-Collector, Ongole for his earlier participation in politics.³ In all resignation letters of the Village Officers of twenty nine villages in the Guntur district were reported to have been received by the government.⁴

The government officers expressed different opinions as to the actual cause of Village officer's resignations. A. Galleti, District Collector, Guntur who visited Pedanandipadu firka discussed the matter with the resigning officers. He reports : "They are rich men. They maintain with warmth that they have not resigned for political reasons, but because the Government have not redressed the service grievances put forth by the Village Officer's Associations. The Board and the Government are familiar with these; too little pay and too much work; being constantly sent for, being treated with little respect.....but the last and the decisive factor in the revolt is the recent reductions of the village establishment, by which they are deprived of Assistant *Karnams*,

1. Konda Venkatappayya: Op. cit. p. 278.

2. Signed Statement of Kota Viswanadham.

3. "No-tax campaign in Duddukur of Guntur district as narrated by Sri Duddukuru Sri Krishnamurthy, Karnam, Duddukur."
(A P State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

4. Report of Harris, Member, Board of Revenue on the situation in Guntur Krishna and Godavari dated January 16, 1922.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

Assistant Headman *Vettis* and *Mohatads*. Even the loyal headmen complained bitterly of this; how was he, he said, to distrain movables and guard them or attach immovable property and prevent its cultivation without *Vettis* and *Mohatads*?".¹

But according to Harris, Member, Board of Revenue, "The immediate cause is the instigation of Village Officers' Associations and District Congresses: the latter are now holding meetings all over the delta advocating non-payment of taxes". He further opined "There is one outstanding cause of the present situation the N. C. O. movement - working on the real and imaginary grievances of the Village Officers and ryot (but chiefly the former) through the District Congress, the Village Officers' Association and the agitator: the 'grievances' are many and some of them are real, but none of them by themselves, nor all of them together, could have produced this situation without N. C. O. manipulation."²

Harries appears to have arrived at a correct understanding as to the cause of the resignation of the Village Officers. Konda Venkatappayya says that Machiraju Ramamurthy and Parvataneni Veerayya Chowdary entered heart and soul into the no-tax campaign in the Pedanandipadu firka. Machiraju Ramamurthy was the Secretary of Andhra Desa Grama Palana Sangham and the editor of "Grama Palanam" published on behalf of the Andhra Village Officers' Association.

1. A. Galleti, District Collector, Guntur to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras. Fort St. George, Madras dated January 8, 1922.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

2. Report of Harris, Member, Board of Revenue on the situation in Krishna, Guntur and Godavari, dated January 16, 1922,
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

He took a prominent part in the Guntur District Congress deliberations in which no-tax campaign was decided upon. He was one of the ten who defied Section 144 Cr. P. C. imposed in Ponnur. He resigned the Karanamship of Chandavolu and had been instrumental in influencing a large number of his fellow V. Os in the district to resign their appointment and take part in the no-tax campaign".¹ The Village Officers of certain villages publicly announced their resignation at the D. C. C. meeting held at Ponnur in which no-tax campaign was decided. They were the village Officers of Kollimerla, Munipalle, Mamillapalli and Patchalatadiparru of Bapatla taluq, Siripadu, Pittalavaripalem, Machavaram, Penumudi and Mulukuduru of Repalle taluq.² What more concrete proof is required to assert that though the Village Officers had genuine service grievances, their main cause for resignation was the N. C. O. agitation as Harris, Member, Board of Revenue pointed out ?

The government did all it could to break the resistance of the Village Officers. It tried to remove some of their grievances. It authorised the Collector to assure the Village Officers that there would not be any loss of hereditary rights for them and that with the object of raising their pay the Board had long ago advised the government to reimpose the Proprietary Estates Village Service Cess.³ This had no effect on the attitude of the Village Officers. The government attempted to fill

1. The Hindu dated January 19, 1921.

2. Personal Assistant of the District Superintendent of Police, Guntur to the District Collector and Magistrate, Guntur (Copy) dated January 12, 1922.
(A. P. State Archives H.F.S. Section)

3. Report of Harris, Member, Board of Revenue on the situation in Krishna Guntur and Godavari, dated January 16, 1922.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

The government announced in the press communique issued by the Publicity Department dated January 20, 1922: "The question of reimposing the Proprietary Estates Village Service Cess for the purpose of increasing the pay of Village Officers in Proprietary Estates is under consideration; meanwhile the Government propose to introduce legislation forthwith depriving permanently of their hereditary rights of the families of Village Officers dismissed for disloyalty though they have no intention at present of interfering otherwise with the hereditary rights of the village Officers"

Press Communique issued by the Publicity Department, Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras dated January 20, 1922:
(A.P. State Archives H.F.S. Section)

the vacancies that arose on account of the resignations. In selecting men to fill the posts the Collector was authorised to disregard the rule as to the educational qualifications provided that he was satisfied that the persons appointed were capable of discharging their duties of office.¹ But neither entreaties nor threats unnerved the Village Officers. The collector ruefully reported to his superiors in the Fort St. George "There are candidates for the vacant posts, especially Assistant Karanams who had lost their jobs, but when the Sub-Collector attempted to put one in-charge, with Reserve Police camping in the village, the man's courage failed him".² Rutherford, whom the government sent to deal with the situation in Pedanandipadu informed his superiors that in Varagani of Bapatla taluq the Munsiffs had resigned and the Karanam was the leader of the movement. The village menials were also absent, and he faced complete non-cooperation.³

SANTI SENA

The Working Committee of the Guntur District Congress met on December 9 1921 and resolved to organise Santi Sena. It constituted a sub-committee with N.V.L. Narasimharao, P. H. Gupta and Maddi Radhakrishnayya to enlist volunteers.⁴ In pursuance of this resolution volunteers were enlisted in many villages. Parvataneni Veerayya Chowdary enlisted hundreds of them in many

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1. G. O. No. 130, Revenue Department, dated 19th January, 1922.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)
 2. A. Galleti, District Collector, Guntur to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras dated January 8, 1922.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)
 3. Rutherford to R.A. Graham, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras dated January 26, 1922.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)
 4. The Hindu dated December 19, 1921.

villages of Pedanandipadu firka. The volunteers were a dedicated lot. They were intrepid, and even in the face of grave provocation by the police or revenue officials they did not lose balance. Some of the volunteers served as messengers. They toured villages day and night and carried information to their leaders especially Konda Venkatappayya.¹ The Santi Sena organised the people so well for the no-tax campaign that the government officials faced complete non-cooperation in the villages. Rutherford wrote: "A crowd of volunteers in uniform and with *lathis* hung in the background and if anyone was seen speaking to me or the peon there were shouts of 'don't say anything' and a volunteer would come lounging up".² The Santi Sena created such trouble to the Government that the District Collector sent proposals to the government to Fort St. George to declare it an unlawful association. But the government, however, did not resort to it. It instructed Collector Galletti "to take proceedings without any delay under the Security Sections of the Criminal Procedure Code against the leaders of the volunteers and if possible the promoters of the organisation in the first instance."³

IMPLEMENTATION OF NO-TAX CAMPAIGN

With the resignation of large numbers of Village Officers and the formation of the Santi Sena the stage was set for the implementation of no-tax campaign as

1. Konda Venkatappayya: Op. cit. p: 290.

2. Rutherford to R. A. Graham, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras dated January 26, 1922.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

3. Instructions to the District Collector, Guntur dated January 30, 1922.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

per the Ahmadabad Congress resolution. Konda Venkatappaya sent a telegram to Gandhi which said :

".....The movement is far ahead. Village officers including Panchama and Christian Vettians are resigning in large numbers. Arrests of workers, batch after batch, are increasing in different places. Co-operators were converted by volunteer corps in most villages. Panchamas and Christians are enlisting, excavating wells, untouchability is disappearing. The attachment though very provocative the people are submitting. Cooking vessels, even with food, are distrained even by Christian officials entering Brahmin kitchens, but these acts are not objected to. The taluqs in experiment are self-sufficient in Khaddar. Not less than 60% in villages, including women, wear khaddar. We respectfully submit that Delhi conditions are satisfied.

The military arrived at Guntur, with armoured cars and motor lorries. Advocacy of payment under the circumstances will result in the ultimate effacement of our district from the movement, seriously jeopardising even other districts. Awaiting your favourable consideration, reply,

Konda Venkatappaya,
President,
Andhra Provincial Congress Committee.

Nadimpalli Narasimharao,
Secretary.

Andhra Provincial Congress Committee.
Polisetty Hanumaiah Gupta,
Member.

To this telegram Gandhi's reply was :

"You are the best judges of the situation. If Delhi conditions are satisfied and if you feel confident, I have

no right to interfere. God speed. He will bless all honest efforts. Keep me daily informed.

Gandhi".¹

There were, however, leaders who pleaded restraint. N. Subba Rao Panthulu from Rajahmundry, : "I feel that one false step taken now lands us in irretrievable loss and misery, and there is no use of regrets and heart-burnings afterwards. A heavy responsibility rests on the leaders to offer sound advice and guide the masses aright at this juncture. Over-enthusiasm should not be mistaken for a steady determination guiding the conduct of life. Witness the exuberance of college students in 1908 when they went out on strike because they were not allowed to Wear Vande Mataram medals and how soon they repented of their hasty step.....Such instances need not be multiplied. I am aware that the present movement is vastly different and more widespread but the laws of social and political progress are the same. We cannot hope to escape from them by sudden jumps without patience and severance of discipline.....".² P. V. Subbarao, M. L. C, wrote that the Guntur District Congress Committee should know that serious disorders would result, as the ryots had not been trained to be non-violent. "The committee must accept full responsibility for their action. Even in their own interests the non-cooperator should see that the failure of the movement in the district will only stiffen the attitude of the Government"³. P.V Subbarao was a Justice Party member of the Madras Legislature. He was a staunch cooperator, and his aim was to distract the people and the Congress from their cherished goals. But even the advice of well-meaning leaders

1. Konda Venkatappayya's telegram and Gandhi's reply were quoted in The Hindu dated January 23, 1922.

2. The Hindu dated January 25, 1922.

3. The Hindu dated January 24, 1922.

like N. Subbarao Panthulu was not to the taste of the masses. The die was cast, and there was to be no retreat, at least, till some one of national stature advised them to the contrary.

The non-tax campaign was in full swing in the Guntur district in general and Pedanandipadu firka in the Bapatla taluq and Duddukur Addanki and Santhanuthalapadu firkas in the Ongole taluq in particular from the day the District Congress Committee took the momentous decision on January 12th till the middle of February when Gandhi advised its suspension till he experimented it himself in Bardoli. During this period there was a battle royal between the people of these firkas on one side and the government on the other. The people showed solid determination to bring the government to naught and the government was determined to break the will of the people as it was afraid that "the infection will soon effect" other districts.

REPRESSION

With the refusal of the people to pay taxes, the government brought in the army. At the request of the District Magistrate a detachment of the Governor's Body Guard was stationed in Guntur.² The soldiers toting machine guns conducted route-marches in the various villages of Pedanandipadu in order to instill fear in the people.³ Armoured cars also showed

1. Report of Harris, Member, Board of Revenue on the situation in Krishna, Guntur and Godavari, dated January 16, 1922, (A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

2. R. A. Graham, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to S. P. O. Donnel, Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, dated February 16, 1922 (A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

3. Konda Venkatappayya: Op. cit. p: 295.

themselves up where resistance to the authorities was much. ¹ The police force was considerably increased and under Section 15 of the Police Act of 1861 the inhabitants of Pedanandipadu firka were ordered to pay the cost of their maintenance.²

Distrain and attachment of movable and immovable property was resorted to by the government. In this connection the rules were considerably amended. Land or movable property attached was immediately brought for auction. L. T. Harris, Member, Board of Revenue, who was sent to Guntur to take such measures as he might find necessary, decided to stimulate collection of taxes by ordering to "reduce to an absolute minimum the delay that need occur between the attachment (distrain) and sale of immovable (or of movable) property. In this emergency movable property should be liable to sale on the spot immediately after distrain and immovable within three days. All officers consulted are agreed that no deterrent will be so effective against the wilful defaulter as actually seeing his land sold, the sale of land for arrears is a very rare event, except in some very exceptional circumstances: it is almost immediately redeemed before the attachment period expires. The same may be said, in lesser degree, in regard to movables,"³

1. Ibid. p. 291.

The government in its communique stated "A small body of Infantry and a section of armoured cars have been sent to Guntur in support of the civil authorities. and it is hoped that their presence will put heart into the loyal part of the population and encourage them to resist intimidation".

Government communique dated February 2, 1922.

(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

2. Proclamation issued by the Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras dated January 20, 1922.

(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

3. Report of Harris, Member, Board of Revenue on the situation in Krishna, Guntur and Godavari, dated January 16, 1922.

(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

The revenue officials adopted various measures to confuse the people into submission. In Duddukur, *Tahsildar* Somayajulu managed to get to his camp three ryots who were habituated to drink. He paid taxes from his own pocket and caused receipts issued to them. He then spread a rumour in the village that the three ryots had voluntarily paid the taxes. This he did to demoralise the villagers.¹

As was wont with it, the government tried its hand at divide et impera'. It announced that when the land was bought in by the government, when bidders were not forthcoming to take part in auction, the land so bought would be allotted to the members of the Depressed Classes.² This measure contemplated by the Government was welcomed by Gandhi. He said that such arrangement was would suit both parties. "Non-cooperators have undertaken to be non-violent, to risk the loss of their all for the purpose of gaining their end, and must, therefore, allow their belongings to be sold.....The proposal to allow the Depressed Classes to bid for and purchase forfeited lands is ideal. What can be better than that the forfeited lands should be temporarily occupied by the very classes whom we want to see raised from their depressed state? I used the adverb 'temporarily' for the present occupiers must..... know that they must get Swaraj and that under Swaraj they must be restored to their original status with honour added thereto. The Depressed Classes, who are being used as pawns in the game by the government cannot be adversely affected by dispossession, for it

1. Ramachandrani Venkatappa's article "Ongole taluka lo Bahumukha Jateeya Chaitanyamu" in Gundlapalli Audinurayana Shastipurthi Sanchika (Ongole, 1972) (Telugu), p. 14.

This information is corroborated by C. V. S. Sastry in his signed statement.

2. Press communique issued by R. A. Graham, Chief Secretary, Government of Madras. Fort. St. George, Madras dated January 20, 1922. (A P, State Archives, H.F S. Section)

will be the primary care of the *Swaraj* Government to see them well-settled, happy and contented".¹

The Government was so ruthless in attaching the property that it stopped at nothing. Land, grain, household utensils, furniture and cattle were attached. In Addanki, *Tahsildar* Somayajulu attempted to seize from the neck of Kota Sundaramma her *mangala sutra*. She took two steps backwards, removed the chain herself and threw it at the face of Somayajulu.²

The authorities took recourse to strong-arm-tactics in Guntur district because as the Governor of Madras himself put it later, the district attempted "to destroy the very foundations of administrative authority by refusing to pay taxes which were due to the state".³ L. T. Harris, Member, Board of Revenue realised that the happenings in Guntur would have repercussion in other districts. He observed: "At the present moment the Collector of Guntur considers the situation in his district very serious and likely to develop rapidly unless strong measures are taken very quickly. The Collector of Kistna.....realises that if the movement is not suppressed in Guntur the infection will very soon effect Kistna."⁴

1. M. K. Gandhi's article 'Awakening in Andhra Desa' in Young India dated February 2, 1922.

2. Signed statement of Kota Viswanadham. Kota Sundaramma was the aunt of Viswanadham. Ramachandrani Venkatappa refers to this episode. See Gundlupalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika, p. 116.

3. Governor's reply to the address presented to him by the Municipal Council, Guntur. See The Hindu dated July 8, 1922.

4. Report of Harris, Member, Board of Revenue on the situation in Krishna, Guntur and Godavari, dated January 16, 1922. (A P State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

SOCIAL BOYCOTT OF THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Despite the presence of military, mounted men, armoured cars, distraints, auction and arrests, and a plethora of other repressive measures the resistance of the people could not be broken. Parvataneni Veerayya Chowdary, though not much educated on western lines kept up the morale of the people by touring practically all villages mounted on horse. The Santi Sena volunteers under his leadership became the eyes and ears of the no-tax movement. They and the people were unperturbed even under grave provocation from either the military or the police.¹ This was in accordance with the advice given by Gandhi who wrote in *Young India* "When the Government military is opened on them, they are expected to expose their willing breasts; not their unwilling backs to the bullets, and still not harbour revenge or resentment".²

With the presence of the volunteers everywhere and at all times and with the exhortations of leaders like Konda Venkatappayya and Parvataneni Veerayya Chowdary, the ryots become intrepid and refuse to pay taxes. In Edumudi and Duddukur, the volunteers and the Congress workers advised the house-holders not to keep valuable jewellery or cash in the houses to avoid attachment.³

Social boycott of the government officials was thoroughly organised. The merchant community refused to sell them articles of daily use.⁴ In Duddukur, sub-

1. Konda Venkatappayya: Op. cit. p: 291.

2. M. K. Gandhi's article 'Awakening in Andhra Desa' in Young India dated February 2, 1922.

3. C. V. S. Sastry in his signed statement says that the villagers were instructed not to keep anything in their houses except earthen pots for cooking purposes:

4. Konda Venkatappayya :Op. cit. p: 291.

collector Akbar Hydari and Tahsildar Pillalamarri Somayajulu could not secure even water.¹ In Duddukur complete social boycott of government officials for fifteen days was organised by Abbaraju Subbarayadu, Karanam of Koniki. He saw to it that all villages were *tom-tomed* not to make supplies or sell provisions to government officials.² Rutherford who was deputed by the government to deal with the situation in Pedanandipadu had to face complete social boycott wherever he went. He wrote, "I went out originally to see how the 75th Carnatics were getting on.....The peon with me did not know exactly which was the village, and when we first arrived, none would tell us whether it was Nandipad or where the troops were. They either ran away or said they did not know". Rutherford faced up-hill task with regard to distraint and attachment of properties of the defaulters. He writes about his experience in Varagani, a village in Pedanandipadu firka : "the village munsiffs have resigned and the Karanam is a leader of the movement. The village menials were absent. To attach lands the Revenue Inspectors have to find each survey number by the help of the survey plan.....There was practically nobody to be seen except volunteers who moved off as soon as I approached while others moved up from behind. Nobody would say where the defaulters were living and we were only able to find the homes through the fact that villages in this district were surveyed in detail.....All doors were closed. The first house was empty and on the door being opened nothing was found. In the next house the women marched out and the owner refused to appear. Grain had to be

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1. Ramachandrani Venkatappa's article "Ongolu Taloka lo Bahumukha Jateeya Chaitanyamu" in Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika (Ongole, 1972) (Telugu), p. 114.
 2. No. tax campaign in Duddukur of Guntur District, as narrated by Duddukur Sri Krishnamurthy, Karanam, Duddukur, (A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

attached and the measuring of it, tying up and marking of bags, writing attachment lists took two hours. The reserve Police had to do all the coolie work".¹

CONGRESS SUB-COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION AND THE SUSPENSION OF THE MOVEMENT

Arrests, distraints, military route-marches and armoured cars could not cow down the people's determination not to pay government taxes. But among the leaders, however, there was difference of opinion as to the starting of no-tax campaign and its continuance when once it was started. Some entertained serious doubts whether the places selected for non-tax campaign had fulfilled Delhi conditions. So, the Guntur D. C. C. met on January 26th in the house of Konda Venkatappayya with Anche Sivayya presiding and appointed a sub-committee consisting of T. Prakasam, K. Nageswararao and D. Narayana raju to visit the areas in the district where payment of taxes was suspended to ascertain whether they satisfied conditions laid down at Delhi.²

The sub-committee toured through the various parts of the district from 31st January to 7th February and prepared a report.³ According to the findings of the sub-committee there were four thousand national volunteers doing excellent organisational work, in matters of Khaddar the villagers were self-contained, attempts to remove untouchability made "extra-ordinary progress" and the people as well as the volunteers gave "abundant proof of non-violence and self-sacrifice".

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1. Rutherford of R. A. Graham, Chief Secretary, Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras dated January 26, 1922.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)
 2. The Hindu dated January 28, 1922.
 3. The Hindu dated February 11, 1922.

However, the sub-committee felt it difficult to say now far the masses could remain absolutely peaceful if more drastic and inhuman measures were employed by the government. The sub-committee therefore recommended "the postponement of this campaign until atleast it is tried in Bardoli by Mahatma Gandhi.....".¹

On February 11th the District Congress met at Konda Venkatappayya's house to consider the recommendations of the Sub-Committee and to decide whether the movement should be continued or not.² When the debate was going on some one thrust into the hands of Konda Venkatappayya a small note from Gandhi in which the latter recommended the suspension of no-tax campaign. The note said, "If Andhra stops civil disobedience, I shall be glad. But if it cannot stop, I shall not mind it, provided of course control is attained over forces of violence and all conditions are fulfilled-M. K. Gandhi".³ This note was found on N. V. L. Narasimharao when he was arrested. The Collector sent it in original to the government.⁴ However, the note of Gandhi and the recommendations of the sub-committee dampened the enthusiasm of the D. C. C. which recommended the suspension of the no-tax campaign throughout the district. The decision of the D. C. C. was announced by Prakasam to the vast gathering that assembled in the compound of Konda Venkatappayya's house.⁵

1 The Hindu dated February 11, 1922.

2 District Collector, Guntur to R. A. Graham, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras dated February 14 1922.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

3. Konda Venkatappayya :Op. cit. p: 297.
The note is reproduced in G. O. No. 362. Public Department, April 26, 1922.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

4. District Collector, Guntur to R. A. Graham, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras dated February 14, 1922.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

5. Konda Venkatappayya: Op. cit. p: 298.

With the announcement of the suspension of the movement by the D. C. C. people started paying taxes. By February 14th, 1922 the Collector could report to the Chief Secretary, Government of Madras, "It seems clear that the resistance of Pedanandipad firka is breaking.....my latest information is that collections are proceeding briskly in Pedanandipadu and the Special Officer expects to get most of the arrears by 20th of this month and I do not anticipate that it will be necessary to issue anymore attachment notices".¹ By February 20th the collections reached "the highest daily figures so far obtained.....".² By July 1922 normalcy was restored throughout the Guntur district and Rutherford, who took over the administration of the district as Collector recommended that "the payments for punitive police should cease after six months instead of after a year which was the original intention". The recommendations of the Magistrate were adopted by the government.³

PEOPLE'S REACTION TO THE SUSPENSION

The withdrawal of the campaign caused much anguish to those who led it. Konda Venkatappayya was much disheartened at the receipt of Gandhi's note recommending the suspension of the movement.⁴ When the decision of the D. C. C. was announced to the people

1. District Collector, Guntur to R. A. Graham, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras dated February 14, 1922.
(A.P. State Archives H.F.S. Section)

2. District Collector, Guntur to R. A. Graham, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras dated February 22, 1922.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

3. Governor's reply to the address presented to him by the Municipal Council, Guntur. See *The Hindu* dated July 8, 1922.

4. Konda Venkatappayya : *Op. cit.* p. 297.

that gathered in the compound of Venkatappayya's house, there were vehement protests and jeers.¹

The D.C.C. meeting on 12th January with so much fanfare resolved that the entire district of Guntur except a few areas was fit for no-tax campaign, and urged the people to make the campaign a success. But when the movement was at its peak, it met on February 11th, and cried halt. In this case, it was not the people yielding to the mounting pressure of the government. For one full month they saw their cattle, land, utensils, grain etc., attached and distrained. They suffered ignominy at the hands of the police and military. They saw dedicated workers jailed. They received sumptuous treatment from the butt-ends of the guns of the tommies. Their very life was totally disorganised. Still they kept up their morale and faced the might of the British bureaucracy bravely. They never even once showed signs of submission. When the movement was at its height it was the leadership that cried halt and suspended the movement. It was a clear case of the leadership letting down the following but not vice versa. But it can be stated that the movement was confined to a few firkas, and faced with the might of the British it was bound to collapse sooner or later. It is arguable that had the provincial and national leadership taken cue from Pedanandipadu and Duddukuru-they attained all India fame at the height of their struggle- and extended the movement to the greater part of the province and the country, the British bureaucracy could not have concentrated their might on these firkas, and the pace of the freedom movement would have definitely quickened, and the British might have quitted the country much earlier.

Though the withdrawal of the movement caused much heart-burning and disappointment to the local

1. Ibid. p. 290.

leaders, as disciplined congressmen, they abided by the verdict of Gandhi and district congress committee. As a leader of the Duddukuru no-tax campaign put it, "We were very much disappointed, but still as disciplined congressmen we had to obey the instructions of Gandhi, who held complete sway over us. But for him we would not have suspended the movement. He actually wielded a magician's wand".¹

NATURE AND CHARACTER OF THE MOVEMENT

As to the nature and character of the movement David Washbrook calls it "the least spontaneous although the most celebrated of all the strikes".² Judith M. Brown opened, "the heart of the movement to postpone payment of taxes was Pedanandipadu firka in Bapatla taluka, where a majority of officials resigned. Here were people like the patidars of Gujarat, influential in village life but not part of the political nation in relation to the institutional politics of nationalism".³ David Washbrook's contention is that the Guntur no-tax campaign was not a spontaneous movement, and that it was engineered by the Village Officers, and in the beginning the Andhra Congress was "wary of associating itself with such as obviously dangerous movement". Later the Congress according Washbrook, was forced "to join in order to keep up its political credibility".⁴ Judith M. Brown states that Village Officer's whose heart was not in the national movement brought about the no-tax campaign.

1. Signed Statement of Kota Viswanatham.

2. John Gallagher, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal (Editors) : Op. cit. p.198. foot-note.

3. Judith M. Brown : Op. cit. p. 29.

4. John Gallagher, Gordon Johnson and Anil Seal (Editors) : Op. cit. p. 198. foot-note.

It should, however, be noted that a no-tax campaign throughout the country was first mooted in the A.I.C.C. meeting held in Delhi in November 1921 and resolutions to the effect were passed in the Ahmadabad Congress session during the fag end of December 1921. The Guntur D. C. C. drew inspiration from the Delhi resolutions and Ahmadabad resolutions, and embarked upon no-tax campaign. Without encouragement from above, the D. C. C. would not have taken such a course. So inspiration for the Guntur D. C. C. to encourage the people to withhold taxes came from the All India Congress resolutions, but not the strike of the Village Officers. The Village Officers' strike came handy to the D. C. C. It was, no doubt much helpful to the movement. The revenue authorities, deprived of the assistance of the Village Officers, found it hard to locate the defaulters to distrain their property and to auction it. Even if the Village Officers had cooperated with the authorities, there would not have been much difference as to the progress of the movement. When the people could withstand the onslaught of the military, police and revenue authorities, could it be anymore hard for them to withstand the Village Officers who could at best give them a pin-pricks? As a matter of fact, there was never a chasm between the Village Officers and the village communities, as was the case with other revenue officers and the village communities. The village Officers were a part of the village life.

As to the spontaneity of the movement, there can not be two opinions. All sections of the people wholeheartedly plunged into the struggle. There were no caste distinctions. The uneducated and the unsophisticated introduced himself to the national yearning for liberty and became a willing partisan in the political struggle. Though the guiding spirit of the movement

was Konda Venkatayya its guiding hand was that of Parvataneni Veerayya Chowdary, a villager by birth, who did not receive any formal education on western lines. Hitherto, the educated played peripheral politics, and to him politics was a pastime. During the non-cooperation movement and the no-tax campaign, all sections and all communities entered the fray. This created quite a commotion in bureaucratic circles. As L. T. Harris put it "The movement is usually referred to as non-cooperation or civil disobedience; it would be more appropriately described as attempted revolution; its express object is to subvert the existing Government".¹

Bal Gangadhar Tilak even as far back as 1896 declared: "The country's emancipation can only be achieved by removing the clouds of lethargy and indifference which have been hanging over the peasant, who is the soul of India. We must remove these clouds and for that we must completely identify ourselves with the peasant....."² During the non-tax campaign, the clouds of lethargy and indifference of the peasant were substantially removed in the Guntur district. He was as much prepared as the student and the teacher, the worker and the vakil to suffer and sacrifice for the country.

The peasants became intrepid in their attitude towards the government and its agencies of repression - police and military. At the height of the campaign in Duddukuru, Sub-Collector Akbar Hydari of Ongole proceeded to a village called Maddirala-Muppalla, and distrained a box in the house of a ryot towards. He put the box in a cart and he was returning to Duddukuru.

1. Report of Harris Member, Board of Revenue on the situation in Krishna, Guntur and Godavari dated January 16, 1922.
(A. P. State Archives H.F.S. Section)

2. Quoted in D. V. Tahmankar's Sardar Patel (London, 1973) p. 92.

The lady of the house Chigurupati Chinnammi ran after him, stopped the cart and did not allow the Sub-Collector to proceed. This happened in the full presence of the police and military. The Sub-Collector had to surrender the box and coolly go away.¹ This was indicative of the spirit defiance of authority in the Villages of Guntur district at that time. As C. V. S. Sastry puts it succinctly, "The atmosphere in the villages...was so charged with dynamism that during those days the writ of the British Government had no effect on the people anywhere. Though the subsequent stages of the freedom movement called for greater sacrifices and suffering, One can with certainty say that the spirit of those days could never be seen again".²

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1. Kothapally Dasaratharamayya's article "Ongolu taluka lo Pannula nirakaranamu" in Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika p 76 C V. S. Sastry and Kota Viswanadham refer extollingly to the courage of this lady in their signed Statements.
 2. Signed statement of C. V. S. Sastry.

The Interlude - 1923 to 1929

SUSPENSION OF NON-COOPERATION AND AFTER

On February 5, 1922 twenty one constables and a Sub-Inspector of police were burnt alive in Chauri Chaura near Gorakhpur in U. P. The All India Congress Committee met at Bardoli on 12th February, and suspended the non-cooperation movement. The A. I. C. C. requested all Congressmen "to stop all activities designed to court and arrest and imprisonment, all volunteer processions and public meetings merely for the purpose of defiance of notifications."¹ One day earlier the Guntur District Congress Committee met at Konda Venkatappayya's house and on the advice of Gandhi and the recommendation of D. C. C. sub-committee suspended the no-tax campaign in the Guntur district.

In spite of the withdrawal of the movement at the national and district level, the government continued its policy of repression. All important leaders were

¹ B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya: *Op. cit* Vol-I, pp. 235, 236

jailed. Rutherford and the Governor's Body Guard (Infantry) camped on the outskirts of Pedanandipadu and arrested those who were suspected to have taken part either in the no-tax campaign or had any contacts with Santi Sena. The arrested were tried and sentenced to various terms in jail. Parvataneni Veerayya Chowdary was arrested and lodged in the Guntur sub-jail. Later he tendered apology to the Government and obtained release. This caused great anguish to Konda Venkatappayya.¹ The government brought up a case against Venkatappayya. Rutherford tried him, and awarded one year simple imprisonment.²

What happened at Ramapuram, a village which lies on the banks of the Krishna about 43 miles from Narasaraopet, was illustrative of the repression let loose by the government in Guntur District. The villagers of Ramapuram were accused of obstructing the Tahsildar in the discharge of his official duties. The treatment given to the villagers on February 13, 1922 the Collector himself recorded: "When we reached Ramapuram, well before dawn, we surrounded the village completely with the Body-guard and the Reserve, most of the villagers being asleep. When the village was surrounded I and the District Superintendent of Police, the Divisional Officer and the Deputy Superintendent entered the main entrance and calling up the Village Officers, we directed all the villagers to assemble in order that we might hold an identification parade and discover and arrest those guilty of resisting the Tahsildar and the Inspector of Police. When the villagers found that the village was completely surrounded and that resistance was impossible we had little difficulty with them. Some attempts at

1. Konda Venkatappayya: Op. cit. pp. 299, 300.

2. Ibid. p. 302.

escape were frustrated. By about an hour after dawn we had assembled practically the whole of the male population of the village and the identification parade was commenced. Altogether eighteen arrests were made. I then warned the villagers as to the extreme folly of their behaviour and advised them to desist from listening to evil advisers".¹

The District Collector's account of the incidents in Ramapuram on 13th February, and the incidents in Minchalapadu of February 26th described in detail in the Fourth Chapter under the caption Palnad Forest Satyagraha indicate that though the A. I. C. C. and the D.C.C suspended the non-cooperation movement, there were still pockets of resistance to the British authority in the district.

As a matter of fact, the leaders found it hard to explain the rationale behind their decision suspending the movement. When Konda Venkatappayya was explaining to the ryots in Pedanandipadu that though the movement was withdrawn for the present it would be started again at an appropriate time and that Indians were bound to get swaraj a not-too-literate ryot confronted him with two questions: "Without waging a war is it possible to achieve independence? Is there any country which attained independence this way?"²

However, it may be noted that leaderless and faced with this might of British bureaucracy with all its coercive and repressive measures, the people could not stand long. It produced deep depression among the

1. District Collector, Guntur to Graham, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras Fort St. George, Madras dated February 22, 1922.

(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section).

2. Konda Venkatappayya :Op. cit. p: 301.

people. As A. K. Majumdar put it, "with the end of non-cooperation movement began lean years of the Congress".¹ This continued till 1929. Though during this period the movement for independence remained dormant, it should not be supposed that there was no political activity in the Guntur district. Though there were no jail-goings and violation of British laws on a massive scale, there were incidents, national and local that kept the embers of freedom movement aflame.

THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE ENQUIRY COMMITTEE

With the arrest of Gandhi on March 13, 1922 and the sentence of six years passed on him on March 18th,² a shadow descended on the Congress at all levels. It was widely debated whether the country was prepared for civil disobedience. It was also thought necessary that a clear reassessment of the situation should be taken. With the slackening of the movement, the government set in full motion its machinery of repression. So a section of Congressmen wanted to revive civil disobedience in some form or other. To find solution to those problems, the A. I. C. C. met at Lucknow on the 7th, 8th and 9th of June 1922 and authorised the President Hakim Ajmal Khan to nominate a committee to tour the country and report on the situation. Accordingly, the President nominated Motilal Nehru, Dr. Ansari, V. J. Patel, S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar, C. Rajagopalachariar and Seth Chothani. Hakim Ajmal Khan was the Chairman of the committee. Seth Chothani could not join the committee, however. This committee later became famous as Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee.³

1. A. K. Majumdar: *Advent of Independence* (Bombay, 1963) p. 98.

2. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya: *Op. cit.* Vol-I, pp. 237, 238.

3. *Ibid.* p. 243.

As a part of their tour programme the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee visited Guntur on August 1, 1922. When the train stopped at Tenali station large crowds gathered "to express their patriotism." Telugu verses cordially welcoming the committee were read. Motilal Nehru, Dr. M. A. Ansari, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and other members of the committee expressed their happiness for the splendid welcome extended to them by the Tenali people. They exhorted the people to carry on the constructive programme of the Congress.¹

In Guntur large sections of people gathered to welcome the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee. The Sub-divisional Magistrate promulgated Section 144 Cr. P. C. prohibiting Congress and Khilafat volunteers from taking part in the reception of the leaders or in the processions connected therewith. Even before the arrival of the committee to Guntur, 250 people were arrested. Among them were Unnava Lakshminarayana and Madabhushi Vedantam Narasimhacharyulu. The pandal raised in order to hold a public meeting was pulled down by the police.²

But the most important event connected with the visit of the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee was the civic address presented by the Guntur Municipal Council. The Municipal Council had earlier voted a public welcome address which had been vetoed by the Collector "who chose to constitute himself the public censor of the Council's conduct".³ However, it was resolved that the Chairman of the Municipal Council, Raza Khan Saheb, should read the municipal address.

1. The Hindu dated August 2, 1922.

2. The Hindu dated August 2, 1922.

3. The Hindu dated August 2, 1922.

Since section 144 Cr. P. C. was promulgated, the Chairman lost nerve and fled the scene. Thereupon, Tangu-turi Prakasam enjoined N. V. L. Narasimharao, a member of the council, to read the address. N. V. L. Narasimharao replied that if he was nominated Chairman of the Council by the large crowds that gathered there, he would defy Section 144 Cr. P. C. by reading welcome address to the committee. Thereupon, Motilal Nehru addressed the people that gathered there thus: "I am vetoing the veto of the Collector. Your Chairman has absconded. I am appointing Narasimharao as your Chairman. Do you agree?" The vast gathering rapturously applauded and approved the proposition of Motilal Nehru. N. V. L. Narasimharao read out and presented the welcome address to the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee.¹ Pandit Motilal Nehru, in his reply, explained the peculiar significance and the value of the municipal address. The address and the reception accorded to them showed that the people of Guntur were firmly on the side of the Congress and wedded to the ideals of swaraj in spite of adverse circumstances.²

The incidents that took place in Guntur during the Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee's visit caused anxiety to the government. R.A. Graham, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras called it a "revival of non-cooperation propaganda". The Chief Secretary in his letter to S.P.O. Donnel, Secretary, Home Department, Government of India referred to the "large meeting in the evening at which one of the non-cooperating councillors of the municipality read, as coming from the people

¹ Personal papers of N. V. L. Narasimharao.

² The Hindu dated August 2, 1922.

of Guntur, the address voted by the council but vetoed by the Collector".¹

SWARAJ PARTY

The Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee come to the conclusion that the country was not prepared for civil disobedience but authorised the P. C. Cs to "sanction limited mass civil disobedience on their own responsibility....." Three members of the committee-Hakim Ajmal Khan, Motilal Nehru and V. J. Patel - recommended that "non-cooperators should contest the elections on the issue of the redress of the Punjab and Khilafat wrongs and immediate Swarajya, and make every endeavour to be returned in a majority". If the non-cooperators were to be returned in majority they should oppose all governmental measures and scuttle the functioning of the Houses. This was opposed by M. A. Ansari, C. Rajagopalachari and S. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. But the committee, however, unanimously recommended that non-cooperators should seek elections to the Municipalities and District and Local Boards with a view to facilitating the working of the constructive programme.²

These recommendations illustrate the mood of the top leadership of the Congress. There was a tendency to change programme, shift emphasis and alter tactics. There emerged two wings in the Congress-pro-changers and no-changers. Those that favoured Council entry were the pro-changers and those that opposed it were the no-changers. C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru were the important leaders who advocated Council entry to render the

1. R. A. Graham, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to S. P. O. Donnel, Secretary, Home Department, Government of India, dated August 16, 1922. No. 6870-1.

(A.P. State Archives, H,F,S. Section)

2. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : Op. cit. Vol-I, pp. 246, 247.

reforms of the government unworkable from within. Orthodox Gandhians like Rajagopalachari, Rajendra Prasad and Vallabhai Patel were for continued boycott of the Councils.

The controversy between the pro-changers and the no-changers came to a head at the Gaya Congress held in December 1922. The President of the Congress, C.R. Das, made an impassioned plea for Council entry, but no-changers' group carried the day. The resolution passed at Gaya regarding the Council entry was as follows. "Whereas the boycott of Councils carried out during the elections held in 1920 has destroyed the moral strength of the institutions through which Government sought to consolidate its power and carry on its irresponsible rule: And whereas it is necessary again for the people of India to withhold participation in the elections of the next year as an essential programme of non-violent non-cooperation: This Congress resolves to advise that all voters shall abstain from standing as candidates for any one of the Councils and from voting for any candidate offering himself as such in disregard of this advice, and to signify the abstention in such manner as the All India Congress Committee may instruct in that behalf".¹

In spite of his defeat at the Gaya Congress on the Council entry C R. Das was undaunted. He resigned the Presidentship of the Congress and with the active cooperation of Motilal Nehru, Vithalbhai Patel, Malaviya and Jayakar formed the Swaraj Party. C. R. Das was the President and Motilal Nehru was one of the Secretaries of the Swaraj Party which announced a policy of "uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction with a

1. Quoted in Jagadish Sharma's India's Struggle for Freedom
Vol. I (New Delhi, 1962) p. 93.

view to make Government through the Assembly and the Councils impossible".¹

On March 23, 1923 the Guntur branch of the Swaraj Party was formed under the presidency of Madabhushi Vedantam Narasimhacharyulu. A committee was formed with Unnava Lakshminarayana, G. Ramalingayya, B. Raghvarao, Patri Anantarao, S. Suryanarayana Chowdary, Eluru Hanumantharao, G. S. A. Narasimharao, K. Rajeswararao and V. Rangachari, the last mentioned acting as the Secretary. It was also resolved that U. Lakshminarayana, M. V. Narasimhacharyulu and G. Ramalingayya to form a sub-committee to undertake a tour of the district and enlist members.²

C. R. Das started on a tour of South India which "was one of the strong-holds of Gandhism".³ As a part of it Das visited Guntur on June 29, 1923 accompanied by V. Ramadass and V. L. Sastry, Andhra Swaraj Party leaders. *The Hindu's* account of the visit of C. R. Das shows that the people of Guntur were "strongly opposed to Council entry". The paper wrote that Das "had to meet with a great deal of opposition to his programme in this once strong centre of Non-cooperation in South India". The reception accorded to Das was "a poor one". "At the public meeting the gathering was small and there were just 600 persons". Four addresses were presented to him on this occasion out of which two expressed themselves against the policy of the Council entry.⁴ The address of the Guntur Municipal Council presented by N. V. L. Narasimharao, its Chairman, who did not subscribe to the Council entry⁵ was

1. Bipin Chandra, Anales Tripathi and Barua De : Op. cit. p. 144.

2. *The Hindu* dated March 26, 1923.

3. J. P. Suda : Op. cit. p. 213.

4. *The Hindu* dated June 30, 1923.

5. Personal papers of N. V. L. Narasimharao.

according to *The Hindu* "a candid statement of the view of the people there". The paper quotes from the address : "We have now embarked upon a programme which is fraught with uncertainties and your path is more thorny than that of Mahatmaji because when Mahatmaji launched his world revolutionising movement our National Congress not only blessed the movement but also adopted it, thus minimising greatly Mahatmaji's responsibility either for its success or otherwise.....Allow us to sound a note of warning that any false step on the part of your followers will adversely effect the position of the Congress". The address further pointed out that but for the soul purifying movement of the non-cooperation "the Guntur Satyagraha would have been impossible in this land of slavery and stagnation".¹

There were also heated exchanges between C. R. Das and members of the audience in the public meeting held on June 29th. *The Hindu* in its issue of June 30, 1923 wrote, "Members of the audience from all sides showed restlessness and interrupted the speech.....In the result the meeting became a boisterous one Das was heckled with questions.....At one stage Das grew indignant and excited". *The Hindu* also gave in detail the exchanges between C. R. Das and Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya.

It becomes evident, therefore, that the Swaraj Party did not make much head-way in the Guntur district which under the leadership of Gandhians like Konda Venkatappayya remained largely wedded to the orthodox section of the Congress.

1. The Hindu dated June 30, 1923.

However, the schism between the Congress and the Swaraj Party did not last long. Gandhi suddenly took ill during his imprisonment of six years, and had to be operated upon for appendicitis on January 12th, 1924. Gandhi rapidly recovered and he was unconditionally released on 5th February. Thereafter, when he was taking rest at Juhu, a sea-side resort near Bombay, conversations took place between Gandhi and Das,¹ which bore fruit. According to the understanding reached at, C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru were able to get the sanction of Gandhi to try the experiment of Council entry.²

Though the Swarjists did not make much headway in the Guntur District Congress, they were busy with election work to the Council of State, Local Boards and the Guntur Municipal Council. On January 29, 1925 they sponsored the candidature of V. Ramadass to the Council of State to the vacancy caused by the resignation of V. S. S. Sastry.³ *The Hindu* of August 3, 1925 reported that V. Rangachari, the leading Swarjist of the Guntur district engaged himself with Local Board elections. It also reported that the Swaraj Party made an impressive mark on the Taluk Board elections. In the municipal elections conducted in August 1925 Swaraj Party made a good show of itself.⁴

When the controversy was going on between the orthodox and the heterodox forces in the Congress, an incident occurred which brought the Guntur district into national lime-light. The A. I. C. C. that met in Bombay on May 26, 1923 decided that no propaganda be carried on amongst the voters in furtherance of the resolution

¹ B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya: Op. cit. Vol-I, p. 267.

² Ibid. p. 274.

³ *The Hindu* dated January 29, 1925.

⁴ *The Hindu* dated August 21, 1925.

passed at the Gaya Congress with regard to the boycott of the Councils. As a result of this, C. Rajagopalachari, Vallabhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Brij Kishore Prasad, G. V. Deshpande and Jamanlal Bajaj resigned from the Working Committee. So the Working Committee was reconstituted and work was carried on under the Chairmanship of Dr. Ansari.¹ The Bombay compromise was not to the liking of a number of Provincial Congress Committees. The A. I. C. C. met in the second week of July 1923 at Nagpur and declared its adherence to "the propriety and validity of the compromise resolution passed by this Committee on 26th May....." The A.I.C.C. proceeded to condemn the Tamilnadu Congress Committee for acting contrary to the Bombay resolution. This was objected to by a section of the A. I. C. C. The house agreed to drop proceedings against the Tamilnadu Congress. Thereupon, the mover of the proposal Jawaharlal Nehru and the Chairman Dr. Ansari resigned. The resignations were accepted by the A. I. C. C. and a new Working Committee was constituted with Konda Venkatappayya as the President² and Duggirala Gopala krishnayya as the Secretary.³ This was a unique honour to the Guntur district which played such an important role during the non-cooperation movement. Till the third week of September 1923 when the Special Session of the Congress was held at Delhi under the Presidentship of Moulana Abul Kalam Azad⁴ the All-India Congress Committee was led by the two great leaders of the freedom movement in the Guntur district.

Another important result of the A. I. C. C. meeting of Nagpur was the Nagpur Flag Satyagraha. The genesis of this Satyagraha was the objection of the

1. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : Op. cit. Vol-I, p. 255.

2. Ibid P. 256.

3. Gummidithala Venkata Subbarau : Op. Cit. p. 240.

4. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : Op cit. Vol-I, p. 260.

police to the carrying of the National Flag by a procession proceeding towards the Civil Lines of the city. Section 144 Cr. P. C. was promulgated on May 1, 1923 in Nagpur. When the processionists insisted on their right to carry the flag they were arrested and sentenced. The Nagpur Flag Satyagraha soon developed into an all India issue¹, and volunteers were sent from different parts of the country to Nagpur to take part in the satyagraha. Donthireddy Ramireddy, Singampally Subbarao, Malladi Venkata Krishnayya, Mattam Balasubrahmanyam Gupta and Bhattiprolu Surya Prakasarao took part in the Nagpur Flag Satyagraha on behalf of the Guntur district. After their return from Nagpur, a meeting was held in the *Swaraj Maidan*, Guntur on September 19, 1923 under the Chairmanship of Gopalam Ramalingayya. National Flags and Gandhi caps were presented to the Nagpur Satyagrahis on this occasion.² Thus, while the battle between the no-changers and pro-changers within the Congress raged the country and with it the Guntur district was alive "to larger issues involving the self respect of a people who had been woken up from their slumber by Gandhi".³

CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME.

When the Congress and with it the country was convulsing with differences between the no-changers and the pro-changers, and when there was a slump in the political activity between 1923 and 1929, the people of the Guntur District embarked upon considerable constructive programme of Gandhi.

The Guntur District Congress Committee issued a notification on March 12, 1923 requesting the people

1. Ibid p.

2. The Hindu dated September 29, 1923.

3. M. V. Ramanarao: Op cit p. 107.

of the district to observe National Week till 18th March by hawking Khaddar at reasonable rates, enrolling Congress members, forming village Congress committees and collecting Tilak Swaraj Fund. The people were particularly requested not to forget Gandhi's Khaddar message and to hawk Khaddar. The people were also requested to make arrangements on 18th March, the day of Gandhi's incarceration, to clothe the blind, the lame and the sick among the *Harijans*.¹ In pursuance of this appeal the 18th of March, 1923 was observed with "characteristic simplicity" in Guntur. Khaddar was hawked early in the day. There was large sale of Khaddar in spite of the petty tyranny practised by the government. In the evening a public meeting was held in which Bhavanacharyulu spoke at length on *Gandhi Saka* - Gandhi Era - and appealed to all to adopt it.²

Along with the propagation of Khaddar, the district people did not lose sight of the evil of foreign goods, especially foreign cloth. The Guntur public observed March 12, 1929 as the Foreign Cloth Boycott Propaganda Day. There was a big procession which wended its way through the municipal streets and thoroughfares. The procession was led by Konda Venkatappayya, N. V. L. Narasimharao, Maddi Venkata Rangayya and G. V. Punnayya Sastry. A number of enthusiastic youngmen went through the town and collected a big bundle of foreign cloth and made a bonfire of it. In the public meeting held in the evening Konda Venkatappayya exhorted the people not to buy or wear foreign cloth.³

Propaganda against drink was carried on by the district leaders in the true Gandhian spirit by holding

1. The Hindu dated March 13, 1923.

2. The Hindu dated March 21, 1923.

3. The Hindu dated March 13, 1929.

Prohibition Days. Of them the most memorable was the one held on March 24, 1929. A procession of Congressmen headed by G. V. Punnamayya Sastry went through the streets of Guntur. A public meeting was held that day presided over by Chatti Narasimham. Kalluri Subbarao, prominent Congress leader of the Anantapur district, spoke at length on swadeshi. Ch. Bhavayya Chowdary enumerated the details for an organised political campaign in the district.¹

Of all the items of constructive programme the one that attained recognition far and wide was "Universal Brahmanisation", a scheme planned by Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya with Chirala as the centre. By this Gopalakrishnayya wanted to root out casteism in the Hindu religion. According to him "the present day *Brahmins* are Brahmins only in name. They must first be destroyed. And with them, the non-Brahmins also will go. Then must begin the creation of a neo-Brahminical race, which will have no distinction of caste or creed, touchable or untouchable. Then there will be only one caste in the country viz., of Brahmins".² To attain Brahminism, he prescribed three tests viz., 1) wearing of Khaddar, 2) practising of *ahimsa* or non-violence and 3) the recital of *Gayatri*.³ * Gopalakrishnayya propagated this new scheme practically from the time he was released from Trichinopoly jail on October 2, 1922 till his premature death on June 10, 1928. But Gopalakrishnayya's neo-Brahminism did not make much headway. The caste system was too much enmeshed in the Hindu religion as to be rooted out by mere enunciation of some new ideas. Further, neo-Brahminism did not

1. The Hindu dated March 27, 1929.

2. Gummidithala Venkata Subbarao: Op-cit. p. 203.

3. Ibid. p. 219.

* According to tradition Gayatri is a hymn which Brahmins alone can recite.

receive the approval of Gandhi. When this matter was broached by Konda Venkatappayya, Gandhi questioned that instead of Brahminising "why not we Harijanise every-body?".¹ As Prof. M. Venkatarangaiya observed, Gopalakrishnayya's ideas were too radical to be accepted. "He had to plough a lonely furrow and be satisfied with merely propagating them through his lectures and writings. But they are all ideas which have an originality and vitality about them and which have served as source of inspiration to several sections of the people in Andhra. They constitute one of the permanent legacies of... the constructive programme".²

SIMON COMMISSION BOYCOTT.

The current of the freedom movement in the Guntur district again attained high velocity with the appointment of the Simon Commission by the British Cabinet with a view to determining what further action should be taken to extend, change or lessen the degree of responsible government then existing in India. This Commission was composed of seven members with Sir John Simon as the Chairman. Since there was no Indian on this body which was to draft a constitution for India, the Indian National Congress resolved, among other things, to organise mass demonstrations in several cities on the day of the arrival of the Commission in India, and to organise public opinion by vigorous demonstrations for the boycott of the Commission.³

In pursuance of this resolution on February 3, 1928, the day of the arrival of the Commission in Bombay, a complete *hartal* was observed in Guntur. All most all

1. G. V. Subbarau's article "Desabhakta Konda Venkatappayya Panthulu" in Desabhakta Centenary Souvenir. Editor Prof. M. Venkatarangaiya (Hyderabad)

2. M. Venkatarangaiya: Op. cit. Vol III, p. 64.

3. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya: Op. cit. Vol-I, p. 118.

shops were closed and the *hazar* put up "the appearance of a deserted village". All educational institutions and the Municipal and Taluk Board Offices were closed. A very big representative meeting was held in the evening. Konda Venkatappayya and others made "inspiring speeches". Tenali also observed a complete *hartal*.¹

In Andhra, Guntur and Ongole were selected for the Commission's visit. T. Prakasam, V. Ramadass and V. V. Jogayya issued a statement to the press in which they "earnestly" appealed "to the public and local bodies of Guntur and Ongole..... to maintain national self-respect and make the boycott effective and real in both places. Let not Guntur and Ongole betray the Country's cause at this juncture".²

The Commission arrived in Guntur on February 23, 1928. The Congress leaders and the students took out a procession from the Swaraj Office with innumerable black flags and placards with the motto "Simon, go back" and other boycott slogans. Huge lines of black flags were waved on either side as the Simon Commission motored from the special train.³ Students of various educational institutions enthusiastically took part in the boycott programme. J. Roy Strock, Principal of the Andhra Christian College indirectly appealed to the students to leave the college that day if they had any patriotism in them. Similarly Buddiraju Ramachandrarao, Headmaster, Town High School did not allow police into the premises of the Town High School to take away some slogan shouting students. He shouted at

1. The Hindu dated February 6, 1928.

2. The Hindu dated February 22, 1928.

3. The Hindu dated February 24, 1928.

the police: "This institution is my estate. Nobody can enter the premises of my school without my permission, and I am responsible for the behaviour of my students, who are my children".¹

On 23rd evening a huge public meeting was held under the presidentship of N. V. L. Narasimharao.² Ayyadevara Kaleswararao arrived earlier in Guntur with three thousand Santi Sena volunteers. N. V. L. Narasimharao introduced him to the vast audience as "Tandra Papayya that had come from Bezawada to defend the ramparts of Guntur".³ Konda Venkatappayya, N. V. L. Narasimharao and Ayyadevara Kaleswararao made eloquent and inspiring speeches emphasising the boycott of the British goods and congratulating the people of Guntur on the complete, successful and non-violent *hartal*.⁴

On February 25th the Simon Commission visited some rural areas near Guntur. In Chebrole and Kottareddipalem boycott arches greeted the Commission. In Kottareddipalem the Commission managed to visit the *Panchama* Labour School.⁵ When the Simon Commission Special Train steamed through Tenali and Chirala, large crowds gathered at the railway stations and raised full-throated cries: "Simon, go back", "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai".⁶

GUNTUR ALL-PARTIES' CONFERENCE

The appointment of the All-White Simon Commission produced one good result for Indian politics. It brought

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1. Signed statement of Boddapati Subbarao.
 2. The Hindu dated February 24, 1928.
 3. Ayyadevara Kaleswararao: Op. cit. p. 474.
 4. The Hindu dated February 24, 1928.
 5. The Hindu dated February 25, 1928.
 6. The Hindu dated February 28, 1928.

all the important political parties together. The All-Parties' Conference held 25 sittings, and on May 19, 1928 appointed a committee with Motilal Nehru as President to draft the principles of a constitution for India.¹

The Motilal Report "a rare feat of statesmanship"² recommended declaration of rights, parliamentary system of government, bicameral legislature, adult franchise, redrawing of the boundaries of the provinces on the basis of language and an independent judiciary with Supreme Court at its apex.³ The report accepted Dominion Status for India.

Again the All-Parties' Conference met at Lucknow on the 28th, 29th and 30th of August, 1928 and declared in favour of Dominion Self-Government. Some political parties pleaded for complete independence. The conference, however, did not restrict the liberty of action to those political parties whose goal was complete independence.⁴

An All-Parties' Conference was held at Guntur on October 13, 1928 when Besant and her party visited the town. Representatives of all political parties enthusiastically took part in the Conference. Among those present were Konda Venkatappayya, Unnava Lakshminarayana, Gollapudi Sitaramasastry, N. V. L. Narasimharao, K. Rajeswararao, M. Hanumantharao, K. Subrahmanya Sastry (Repalle), N. Subbarao (Tenali), S. Ramaswamy Chowdary, M. Jayanarayana (Bapatla), Bhavanachari and others. The Conference recorded its deep

1. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya: *Op. cit.* Vol-I, pp. 322, 323.

2. K. M. Munshi: *Pilgrimage to Freedom*, Vol-I, (Bombay, 1964) p. 24.

3. Quoted in Tara Chand's *History of Freedom Movement in India*. Vol-IV, pp. 112, 113.

4. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya: *Op. cit.* p. 325.

appreciation of the labours of the sub-committee of All-Parties' Conference and accorded its cordial support to the resolution adopted by the Conference held at Lucknow "Without restricting the liberty of action of those political parties whose goal is complete independence" the Guntur All-Parties' Conference declared that 1) the form of government to be established in India should be responsible - a government in which the executive should be responsible to a popularly elected legislature possessing full and plenary powers and 2) that such form of government should in no event be lower than that of self-governing dominion. The Conference called on all organised political parties in the country to carry on sustained propaganda in furtherance thereof.¹

By 1929 Guntur district fully got over the little inertia that had overtaken her since the suspension of the non-cooperation movement. She was again all ready to plunge into the subsequent movements of the freedom struggle for which the national and local leaders were preparing blue-prints.

1. The Hindu dated October 15, 1928.

Salt Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience

LAHORE CONGRESS AND AFTER

With the Lahore session of the Congress in December 1929 presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru "the hero of the youth of India and the symbol of their new resolve for freedom"¹ the lean years of the freedom struggle in the Guntur district were past. The Lahore session changed the Congress creed from dominion status to complete independence. It appealed to the nation "zealously to prosecute the constructive programme of the Congress", and authorised the All India Congress Committee to launch a programme of civil disobedience. The Working Committee decided to observe January 26, 1930 as Independence Day and authorised Gandhi to start civil disobedience in the way he thought best. Gandhi started the movement marching from Sabarmati to Dandi with the intention of breaking Salt Laws.² R. C. Majumdar's account of Gandhi's march to Dandi

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1. K. P. C. Menon : Nehru, the Spring of Eternal Youth (Lahore. Year of publication not mentioned), p. 68.
 2. R. R. Diwakar : Satyagraha, the power of Truth (Hinsdale, Illinois, 1968), pp. 79, 80

and the inauguration of civil disobedience is worth quoting: "On March 12, 1930 Gandhi with 79 male and female members left the Sabarmati *Ashram* on foot and reached the sea at Dandi on 5th April. It was a veritable triumphal progress. The villagers flocked from all sides, sprinkled the roads, strewed leaves on them, and as the pilgrims passed, sank on their knees..... Early on the morning of the sixth of April Gandhi and his party dipped into the sea-water and picked up some salt left by the waves". It was a "deliberate act of defiance to the mighty British Government", and "it was a signal to the nation".¹ "Salt suddenly became a mysterious word, a word of power. The salt tax was to be attacked and the Salt Laws were to be broken".²

Konda Venkatappayya first entertained grave doubts as to the efficacy of the breaking of Salt Law. He felt that the mighty British government would in no way be shaken by manufacturing contraband salt.³ But when he saw the entire nation galvanised after Gandhi's Dandi march,⁴ his doubts cleared, and he became an enthusiastic participant.

SALT SATYAGRAHA IN THE GUNTUR DISTRICT

The Working Committee of the Guntur District Congress met on March 29 under the Presidentship of Unnava Lakshmibayamma. The committee entrusted the satyagraha movement to a War Council (*Satyagraha Samara Sangham*) consisting of N. V. L. Narasimharao, Anche Sivayya and Seeram Subbarao Naidu. They were empowered to nominate their successors as occasion

1. R. C. Majumdar: Op. cit. Vol-III, p. 338.

2. K. P. C. Menon: Op. cit. p. 69.

3. Konda Venkatappayya: Op. cit. p. 344.

4. Ibid. p. 347.

arose. The committee made plans to enlist three thousand volunteers. The volunteers made extensive propaganda in the towns and the country-side of the district¹ before they reached Guntur where a vast '*Sibiram*' was established in Yedavallivari choultry.²

To supervise and guide the satyagraha Unnava Lakshminarayana was appointed the dictator.³ When he was arrested Seeram Subbarao Naidu took his place. When he was also jailed Kalluri Chandramouli was appointed dictator⁴

Unnava Lakshmibayamma worked hard to bestir the women to join the salt satyagraha. She took out processions in Guntur, and by celebrating the traditional religious functions in which generally women of India participate drew the women into the vortex of the movement. One such function was '*Swarajya Lakshmi Vratam*' celebrated with eclat on April 1, 1930. In the evening the ladies of Guntur again met and singing national songs went round the town and exhorted the local women "to take their due share in the salt satyagraha campaign".⁵

Throughout the salt satyagraha the Guntur Municipal Council under the Chairmanship of N.V. L. Narasimharao remained the bastion of the movement. Besides the Guntur Municipality, the Taluk Boards of Ongole, Sattenapalle and the Municipality of Chirala passed resolutions sympathising with civil disobedience

1. The Hindu dated March 31, 1930.

2. Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit. p. 347.

3. Boddapati Subbarao's article '*Guntur Zilla lo uppu Satyagrahamu nati smrutulu*' *Krishna patrika* dated August 19, 1972, p. 12.

4. The Hindu dated June 5, 1930.

5. The Hindu dated April 12, 1930.

movement¹ in spite of the government warning earlier that it would not hesitate "to resort to the powers of supersession and dissolution....."² The Guntur Municipality did all it could to make salt satyagraha a success in the Guntur town. N. V. L. Narasimharao says that as the Chairman he handed over the municipality to the satyagrahis.³ On March 15, 1930 the Council placed on record their "heartfelt appreciation for the campaign of satyagraha started by Mahatmaji and prayed for its success".⁴ The District Collector, Guntur, wrote to his superiors that the "Guntur Municipal Council is probably the worst offender in the presidency. It has been discovered that it was actively assisting the volunteers who assembled in Guntur..... The Sibiram accounts show that a Municipal Sanitary Inspector was actually managing the Sibiram and keeping the funds".⁵

With the active participation of the municipality and the general enthusiasm sweeping the rural and urban areas, the stage was set for the defiance of the Salt Law. The volunteers from the different taluqs, after touring villages and towns, converged on Guntur on April 6, 1930 where they were received by the local volunteers. They reached the tank called Krishna Sagar, where, seated on the steps of the reservoir, everyone of them took the firm oath to fight for the freedom of the country with all the might at their command. Konda Venkatappayya sprinkled sandal-water on every one of the volunteers. From there the volunteers marched in a procession to the Central Camp - *Pradhana Sibiram* - in Yedavallivari

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1. D. O. No. 19249 R-2-2, L & M dated July 3, 1930.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)
 2. D. O. No. 2414, L & M., dated June 17, 1930.
(A P, State Archives, H F.S. Section)
 3. Personal papers of N. V. L. Narasimharao.
 4. Enclosure to Collector's letter dated July 25, 1930 to C. B. Cottorell, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, Fort St. George, Madras.
(A. P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)
 5. Ibid.

choultry. Gandhi's portrait was carried on a double-horse coach all through the procession. There were many women in the procession. Unnava Lakshmi-bayamma, Eka Ratnamba, President of the *Gunturu Sanatan^a Dharma Mandali*, P. Satyabayamma wife of D. Venkayya, Professor of A. C. College and the students and the teachers of Saradaniketan were in the procession. On the morning of 7th Gandhi's successful breaking of the Salt Law at Dandi the day earlier was announced to the volunteers. Konda Venkatappayya asked the volunteers and the satyagrahis not to be puffed up with the news. He said that Gandhi's breaking of the Salt Law was not the culmination of the satyagraha but only its beginning.¹

Konda Venkatappayya's residence was selected for breaking Salt Law. On 9th April² Konda Venkatappayya, Gollapudi Sitaramasastry, Lakshmi-bayamma, Seeram Subbarao Naidu and others of the Guntur District Congress proceeded to Vadarevu and brought salt brine in pots to Venkatappayya's house. They boiled the brine and manufactured contraband salt. The salt thus prepared was taken out in small packets by the enthusiastic volunteers and sold to the people. The volunteers after hawking the contraband salt assembled at the tank near the shrine of Lord Siva where they were received by Konda Venkatappayya and Unnava Lakshmi-bayamma, the latter singing "*Veera gandhamu techchi namu, veeru levvaro telupudi*" (Tell us who the heroes are, we have come to anoint them).^{3*}

1. The Hindu dated April 7, 1930.

2. District Magistrate F. W. Stewart's Account of the Salt Satyagraha Movement in the Guntur District dated January 20, 1931.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

3. Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit. pp. 350, 351.

* Tripuraneni Ramaswamy Chowdary of Tenali composed this verse during the salt satyagraha.

This was the beginning of the salt satyagraha in Guntur which soon spread to other areas in the district. In the Guntur town bands of enthusiastic volunteers went round residential areas and sold contraband Salt packets. N.V.L. Narasimharao put the first packet of salt for auction. Cheruvu Nageswararao, a leading timber merchant, bought it for Rs. 46/-. D. Hanumantharao Panthulu paid Rs. 116/- for another packet. In all salt packets were sold for Rs. 400/-. Batches of volunteers were also sent to Chirala, Tenali, Narasaraopet and Bapatla. They sold contraband salt packets in open streets and public response to these sales was tremendous despite the knowledge of the implication of buying contraband salt.¹ The volunteers conducted themselves strictly in accordance with Gandhian ideals, and even the District Magistrate F. W. Stewart had to concede that the "volunteers behaved well."²

After breaking the Salt Law technically, the leaders as well as the volunteers encouraged the villagers to make or collect contraband salt on a commercial scale. Among those places selected for this purpose were Vadarevu on the sea near Chirala, Ganapavaram in Bapatla taluq and a place near the Kanuparthi Salt Factory in Ongole taluq. The satyagrahis set up a *sibiram* in the house of Tanguturi Prakasam at Devarampadu near the Kanuparthi Salt Factory. Since good salt was available there the Congress leaders of Ongole taluq concentrated their attention on Devarampadu.³ The government made every attempt to break up the Devarampadu Sibiram and the two natural deposits of salt there. Here is the District Collector's account of the action taken by the

1. The Hindu dated April 10, 11, 12, 1930.

2. District Magistrate F. W. Stewart's Account of the Salt Satyagraha Movement in the Guntur District dated January 20, 1931
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

3. Ramachandrani Venkatappa's article "Ongolu taluka lo bahumukha jateeya chaitanyamu" in Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika. (Ongole, 1972) (Telugu), p. 125.

government: "Near Kanuparthi the volunteers occupied the house of T. Prakasam in Devarampadu and found two natural deposits. One was easily destroyed by the factory establishment but the other was a deep depression filled by waves of the sea at high tide once or twice a month. The Salt Inspector seized the salt as it was collected and he was resisted. Neighbouring villagers took interest as the salt was very good. The Deputy Superintendent of Police, Mr. P. Sourirajulu Naidu and three Head Constables and thirty Police Constables of the Reserve camped in the factory from April 26th..... The plan was to arrest the leaders and fill up the depression. This has been accomplished..... The police finished up by raiding Prakasam's house. They destroyed the salt collected there and seized some papers which provide useful evidence against persons who like to keep in the background".¹ In Vadarevu and Ganapavaram the government faced considerable difficulty in containing the satyagraha. The Collector had to suggest that the Salt Department should spend more money to obliterate the brine pits in order to remove temptation to the satyagrahis.²

GOVERNMENT REPRESSION

At the start of the salt satyagraha movement the district administration did not contemplate drastic action against satyagrahis. It was in pursuance of the instructions which the Government of Madras issued to it on March 27, 1930. The government stated that it did not want "whole-sale arrests should be made or that insignificant people should be arrested. It may in certain circumstances..... consider the arrest of leaders

1. Guntur District Collector, Guntur to C. W. E. Cotton, C. I. E., I. C. S., Chief Secretary, Ootacamund dated May 6, 1930.

(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

2. Ibid

or other individuals of standing and influence, but the Government desire to be consulted before such an arrest is effected".¹ But with the rising tide of the movement in the district, the government resorted to the arresting of not only prominent leaders but also volunteers and ordinary participants in the satyagraha. Nethi Chalapati Rao who was working at Vadarevu was imprisoned under Section 108 Cr. P. C. on April 22, 1930. Annapragada Kameswararao whom the District Collector F.W. Stewart described as "a turbulent man" was jailed on April 23, 1930. On April 24th K. V. L. Narasimharao was treated similarly.² Gollapudi Sitaramasastry "the brains behind the War Council" was arrested on 29th April at Yelavarru.³ Konda Venkatappayya was sentenced to one year simple imprisonment and was lodged in Vellore Central Jail⁴. The number of people jailed in the salt satyagraha runs into hundreds.

The government made every effort to close down the main sibiram in Guntur. For this purpose it made free use of Section 144 Cr. P. C. On the morning of 15th June, Section 144 Cr. P. C. was proclaimed in Guntur within a radius of five miles. The police served notice on Kalluri Chandramouli, the District Dictator, Nagalla Krishnayya Chowdary, T. Sivasankara Sastry and others.

1. Government of Madras D. O. 938 dated March 27, 1930 to the District Magistrate, Guntur.

(A P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

2. District Magistrate F. W. Stewart's Account of the Salt Satyagraha Movement in the Guntur District dated January 27, 1931.

(A P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

To the trying Magistrate's question what his profession was N. V. L. Narasimharao replied, "Honorary preacher of sedition. My present occupation is manufacturing contraband salt".

Personal papers of N. V. L. Narasimharao.

3. District Magistrate F. W. Stewart's Account of the Salt Satyagraha Movement in the Guntur District dated January 27, 1931.

(A P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

4. The Hindu dated April 30, 1930.

5. Konda Venkatappayya : Op. cit. p. 352.

“The police went to the Congress sibiram at Guntur and declared the volunteers that gathered there an unlawful assembly and asked them to disperse. On the refusal of the volunteers to do so, the police under orders of the District Superintendent of Police and District Magistrate, who were both present on the scene, charged the volunteers with lathis and several members of the crowd received injuries. Some of the lady volunteers in the sibiram on refusal to move were forcibly brought out”.¹ After the “sibiram was locked up” and placed under the police-guard, the district administration could report to their superiors that a “steady but thin trickle of volunteers came into Guntur during the next two months” and that they “were duly imprisoned” and that “the main body had been definitely driven home”. The volunteer was made to feel that “the only refuge was in his own house”.²

GANDHI CAP CASE

The government did not stop with the mass arrests and breaking up sibirams. It felt uneasy even at the sight of the symbols of Congress especially the Gandhi cap. On June 20, 1930 the District Magistrate, Guntur, F. W. Stewart issued the following order: “Whereas the public tranquility has been disturbed by the Civil Disobedience Movement and where as information has been received that a notice is being printed to disturb the public tranquility by inciting the public to wear Gandhi cap which is a symbol of one’s sympathy for the Civil Disobedience Movement I, F. W. Stewart, I. C. S. having considered it my duty to maintain public peace, hereby direct that the public should not wear Gandhi

1. The Hindu dated June 16, 1930.

2. District Magistrate F. W. Stewart’s Account of the Salt Satyagraha Movement in the Guntur District dated January 20, 1931.
(A.P. State Archives, H F.S. Section)

cap in any place, frequented by the public within the limits of Guntur Municipality and a radius of five miles therefrom for a period of two months from this date".

The district administration immediately put the Magistrate's order into execution. Orders of arrest and sentences of imprisonment were passed in the wake of the Magistrate's order. Alaparthi Subbayya Chowdary and Meka Raghavayya Chowdary were arrested for wearing Gandhi caps. Madabhushi Challayachary was sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment by the stationary sub-magistrate, Guntur.¹

The Magistrate's order and the arrests in its wake evoked considerable criticism. Tallavajjula Sivasankara Swamy, Govindaraju Venkata Krishnarao, Dr. A. S. Chalapathirao sent the banned Gandhi cap along with the order of the Magistrate to Frenner Brockway, a member of the House of Commons, London, who was known for his broad sympathies for nationalist aspirations of the Indians.²

Leading public figures led deputations to the Collector demanding that he should rescind his order. C. V. Srinivasarao, C. V. Chowdary, Advocates, J. Kuppuswamy Chowdary, President, District Board, P. Lakshmayya Pantulu, Chairman, Guntur Municipality, Ch. Hanumantharao, Honorary Magistrate, V. Bhavanacharyulu, A. Sitapathirao, D. L. Narayana, Vakils, and M. Venkata Subbayya waited on the Collector and represented the matter,³ but it was of no avail.

1. The Hindu dated June 23, 1930.

2. Signed statement of T. Sivasankara Swamy.

3. The Hindu dated June 20, 1930.

Instead of censuring the Collector for passing this "obnoxious" order, the government in the Fort St. George upheld it. C. B. Cotterell, Acting Chief Secretary wrote: "In enforcing the orders, the Police appear to have directed particular attention to those persons wearing Khaddar and more especially Gandhi cap. This is understandable, for the Gandhi cap has never been an ordinary article of headwear in this district; the District Magistrate reports that it had been very rarely seen until the Civil Disobedience Movement started in March, and after that it was used almost exclusively by the volunteers..... The cap was banned frankly as a political symbol; it was not worn in the Guntur District until the Civil Disobedience Movement started; it was worn after that as a token of sympathy for Gandhi and therefore with the anti-Government campaign which he had inaugurated and in the disturbed condition of Guntur, the flaunting of such tokens of sympathy with the movement and of defiance of the Government was likely to encourage and incite others to join it and thus endanger the public peace..... the order proved most effective in checking the dangerous activities of the volunteers among the ignorant population of the town and the district."

When representations to the government were of no avail, the Magistrate's order banning Gandhi cap was taken to the Madras High Court. Justice Pandalai delivered judgement on August 11, 1930 setting aside the orders passed by the Magistrate. On the judgement of Pandalai, *The Hindu* wrote: "We are glad that Mr. Justice Pandalai has defined the true nature and extent

1. M. Venkatarangaiya : Op cit Vol-III, p 147.

2. C. B. Cotterell, C I E , I C S., Acting Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to the Secretary, Government of India (Public Department) dated August 1, 1930. Letter No. 714-S.
(A P, State Archives II F.S. Section)

of the revisional powers of the High Court in these cases in terms which Sir Lawrence Jenkins long ago used, and has resisted the tendency that had grown in certain courts recently to narrow the functions of the High Court in the Administration of Justice and in the maintenance of law and order in which it has only too often been claimed that the executive must be law unto themselves and that their decisions and notions under the plea of emergency must be deemed conclusive".¹ Thus the Guntur district made history by curbing the tendency of the executive to restrict the little liberty the people had.

The popular protests which the District Magistrate's order evoked and the judgement passed on it by Justice Pandalai of the Madras High Court was an eye-opener to the Central Government. It advised the government in Fort St. George: "The Government of India do not wish to criticise the action of the District Magistrate in this particular instance, but..... in their view the issue of orders of this nature against the use of such emblems or symbols is of doubtful wisdom, save in very exceptional circumstances. The Government of India hope, therefore, that it will be found possible to avoid the issue of similar orders in future".²

To cap all its attempts to curb the satyagraha movement, the government declared the Guntur District Congress Committee as unlawful.³

1. The Hindu dated August 12, 1939.

2. H. W. Emerson, C. I. E., C. B. E., I. C. S., Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department to the Chief Secretary, Government of Madras dated August 12, 1939.
Letter No. D-5741 Political.
(A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

3. Report of Inspector General of Police, Madras No. 3294-C, dated October 31, 1931.
(A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

COUNTER PROPAGANDA BY GOVERNMENT

In addition to following a policy of repression, the district administration resorted to counter-propaganda against the salt satyagraha. The government felt that the Madras press had great influence in the shaping of satyagraha in the district. *The Hindu* and *Andhra Patrika*, particularly, had enormous influence in the district. *Janmabhumi* of Machilipatnam published a series of articles on how Ireland was freed.¹ To convert the Congress adherents "who are saturated with onesided newspaper propaganda" the government planned "the resuscitation of the *Durbar* as a Government paper".² Ultimately, the government purchased in bulk the copies of *Durbar* and *Yadardha Vadi* a weekly started in Repalle "at the instance of the Tahsildar" and distributed them among the people.³ On the suggestion of Rai Bahadur P. V. Srinivasarao, a loyalist the government also contemplated to propagate among the people "what the British Government has done for India".⁴

CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

In the midst of the breaking of Salt Laws the satyagrahis did not lose sight of the constructive programme. As during the non-cooperation days, they organised the boycott of foreign goods, especially foreign cloth. For this activity, Tenali was the centre where foreign cloth

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1. District Magistrate F. W. Stewart's Account of the Salt Satyagraha Movement in the Guntur District dated January 20, 1931,
(A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)
 2. District Collector, Guntur to Cotterell, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras dated June 17, 1930.
(A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)
 3. District Collector, Guntur to C. F. V. Williams, I. C. S., Under Secretary to the Government of Madras, Public Department, Madras dated July 21, 1930.
(A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)
 4. District Collector, Guntur to Cotterell, Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras dated June 17, 1930.
(A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

shops were vigourously picketed. "Training was given as to how picketing was to be done on non-violent methods" Practically, everyday throughout the year 1930 a batch of four or five persons was sent into the town to do the picketing. Another batch was kept ready when the first batch was taken into custody. Pavuluri Ramarao, Sheik Ismail Saheb, Nadella Krishnayya Chowdary and Neelam Raghavayya were the active participants in the Tenali foreign goods boycott programme.¹ Bharati Devi Ranga was the leader of the women picketers before the foreign cloth shops.²

Local Bodies and leading professional associations passed resolutions asking the people to boycott foreign cloth. The Tenali Municipal Council passed a resolution on May 9, 1930 calling upon the municipal officers to dispense with foreign cloth and wear khaddar. The resolution of the Chirala Municipal Council passed on April 30, 1930 called upon the Municipal Councillors and employees to wear khaddar.³ The Bar Association, Bapatla, meeting on April 12, 1930 under the presidency of M. Kalidas Panthulu passed the following resolution unanimously: "In the opinion of the Bar Association it is desirable that the members of the Bar should wear khadi clothing while attending the courts".⁴ In Narasaraopet foreign cloth was collected and bonfire of it was made.⁵

1. Triple Boycott Movement in Tenali 1930-31

Statement of Neelam Raghavayya

(A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

2. N. G. Ranga: Bharathi Devi Smruthulu (Nidubrolu, 1972) (Telugu), p. 63.

3. Cotterell C. I. Esq. I. C. S., Acting Chief Secretary to Government of Madras to the Secretary Government of India (Home) Letter No. 887-3 dated September 10, 1930. (A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

4. The Hindu dated April 14, 1930.

5. The Hindu dated June 4, 1930.

Of all the items of the constructive programme of the Guntur district the one that received widespread attention and caused concern to the government was propaganda against drink which manifested itself in the cutting of palmyra spathes and trees. * The Guntur District Congress War Council passed instructions to the satyagrahis to take care of the pernicious evil of drink, and see to it that palmyra trees were chopped off. This was in accordance with the social philosophy of Gandhi who had once gone to the extent of saying: "If I were appointed the dictator of India for one hour only, the first thing I will do will be to close without compensation all the liquor shops".¹ The felling of palmyra trees in the Guntur district was particularly high in Chebrole, Mangalagiri, Khajipalem and Angalakuduru.² By the month of May the spathe-cutting took a dramatic turn.³ The district administration was much agitated, and the Collector reported to his superiors in the Fort St. George: "At one of my subsequent meetings with the ryots, one defended spathe-cutting because he had known so many well-to-do-ryots, who had lost their fortunes by drink. There is a general realisation in the taluqs that leisure and money bring such temptation as drink and dancing girls, and I have no doubt that the cutting of spathes was regarded as a measure of social reform..... spathe-cutting was the most dangerous phase of the movement, as it brought the ordinary ryot into active opposition to Government".⁴

* Sap of palmyra trees when fermented becomes highly intoxicating.

1. Sriman Narain: Gandhi, the Man and His Thought (New Delhi, 1972), p. 28.

2. The Hindu dated April 5, 1930.

3. District Collector, Guntur to C. F. V. Williams, I. C. S., Under Secretary to the Government of Madras. Public Department Madras dated July 21, 1930. (A.P. State Archives, II.F.S. Section)

4. District Magistrate F. W. Stewart's Account of the Salt Satyagraha Movement in the Guntur District dated January 20, 1931. (A.P. State Archives, II.F.S. Section)

The toddy yielding palmyra trees were felled in such large members that the government had to authorise the Collector of Guntur to waive the collection of *moturpha*.¹

The Municipality of Guntur under the Chairmanship of N. V. L. Narasimharao concerned itself with the evils of drink. N. V. L. Narasimharao issued a notice to the Collector which ran as follows :

“ Please take notice that location of toddy shops within my limits is Prohibited, and if they are not removed within twenty four hours necessary action will follow.

N. V. L. Narasimharao,
Chairman,
Guntur Municipality, Guntur”.²

Though N. V. L. Narasimharao was not within legal jurisdiction to issue such notice to the Collector, the notice was indicative of the spirit of the times.

The satyagraha movement launched on April 9, 1930 lasted till the end of the year in the Guntur district. During this period the district waged an intensive struggle facing the government repression cheerfully without ever resorting to violence. The main features of the satyagraha were civil breach of Salt Law, non-violent raids on salt depots and pans, breach of government orders, boycott of foreign goods, especially cloth and constant propaganda against the evil of drink.

1. G. O No. II (S) Mis., Dated June 5, 1930.
(A. P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

2. Personal Papers of N. V. L. Narasimharao.

GANDHI - IRWIN PACT AND AFTER

If viewed from the national angle, the civil disobedience movement demonstrated the awakening of the political consciousness among the people undreamt of before. Gandhi's call to the nation to suffer and sacrifice evoked such a response that the mighty British government found it imperative to reach some sort of agreement with the Congress. Gandhi who was arrested on May 4, 1930 was released on January 26, 1931. Negotiations started between Gandhi and Lord Irwin, the Viceroy. On May 5, 1931 Gandhi - Irwin Pact was concluded, according to which the Congress agreed to discontinue civil disobedience movement and to participate in the Round Table Conference on Indian constitutional reform. The government in its turn agreed to release all political prisoners, and withdraw prosecutions. The government also agreed to allow people to collect salt purely for personal consumption but not for commercial purposes. The government agreed to withdraw ordinances promulgated in connection with the civil disobedience movement. The government also agreed to reinstate government servants and Village Officers and restore properties confiscated during the movement.¹

On the receipt of news of the Gandhi - Irwin Pact in Guntur Konda Venkatappayya who had been released earlier held a meeting in Guntur on March 5, 1931. Venkatappayya says that the meeting was held to celebrate the peace pact.² In the meeting, according to the police version, Venkatappayya during the course of his speech exhorted the audience to carry on vigorous picketing of foreign cloth shops. He also said that India

1. S. Gopal : *The Viceroyalty of Lord Irwin 1926-1931* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 107-110.
Also see appendix for the text of the settlement published on March 5, 1931.
pp. 140-144.

2. Konda Venkatappayya : *Op. cit.* p. 356.

could achieve so much by 60,000 going to jail and that if 60,00,000 of people were to go to jail federal government with safeguards must be given or the British government would have to run away. For this speech Venkatappayya was arrested on March 6, 1931 under Section 17 (1) Cr. L. A. Act. To protest against the arrest of Venkatappayya, a meeting was held at the Swaraj Maidan. The police declared the meeting unlawful and charged the people with *lathis*. A number of people including Neti Chalapathirao were injured.¹ Konda Venkatappayya was, however, released on March 7th following government instructions issued on March 6th to withdraw all the pending cases. On his release Venkatappayya issued a press statement that he never advocated civil disobedience and that the meeting held on March 5th was purely in connection with peace celebrations.²

But for these incidents of March 5th and 6th there were no breaches of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in the Guntur district.

RESUMPTION OF THE MOVEMENT

After attending the Round Table Conference Gandhi landed in Bombay on December 28, 1931 and found repression in full force in many parts of the country. Gandhi wrote to Willingdon, the new Viceroy protesting against the Ordinance *Raj*. Gandhi tried to present the

1. S. B. Report of the District Superintendent of Police Guntur to the Chief Secretary, Government of Madras dated March 6, 1931.

(A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

Reference to this *lathi* charge is made in the unpublished dairies of Mantena Venkataraju under the date caption March 7, 1931. Neti Chalapathirao and Mantena Venkataraju addressed the gathering. When the police charged the people both Chalapathirao and Venkataraju received injuries. Venkataraju received a minor injury on the shoulder whereas Chalapathirao received a serious skull injury. Mantena Venkataraju's unpublished dairies (Telugu)

2. The Hindu dated March 9, 1931.

Congress point of view to Willingdon, but as the latter was unyielding, civil disobedience was resumed. Gandhi wired to the Viceroy on January 3, 1932: "..... I wish to assure Government that every endeavour will be made on the part of the Congress to carry on struggle without malice and in strictly non-violent manner". Thereupon Gandhi and other prominent Congress leaders were arrested on January 4, 1932. ¹

With that the period of truce was over, and the Guntur district with the rest of the country resumed civil disobedience.

with the resumption of the civil disobedience, the government struck at the Congress ruthlessly. All District Congress Committees in Andhra were declared unlawful associations. Practically almost all important leaders were arrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Konda Venkatappayya, Gollapudi Sitaramasastry and Maddi Venkata Rangayya were prohibited from participating either in meetings or in demonstrations aimed at furthering the objects of civil disobedience movement. Malladi Yagna Narayana of Bapatla was convicted for refusing to execute a bond for good behaviour, ² and Gollapudi Sitaramasastry was sentenced to one year simple imprisonment for making what the government thought a seditious speech. ³ Mantena Venkataraju a prominent Congress leader of the Guntur district and Yenamadra Venkatappayya of Karamchedu were sentenced to one year rigorous imprisonment under Section 112 of Cr. P. C. ⁴ In Ongole, Sagi Vijaya

1. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : Op. cit. Vol-I, p. 518.

2. The Hindu dated January 1, 1932.

3. The Hindu dated January 14, 1932.

4. The Hindu dated January 1, 1932.

Ramaraju, Narahari Padmanabham and Chakiri Krishnaswami were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.¹ The arrests and sentences of imprisonment were in accordance with the pattern followed by the government throughout the country. As Subhas Chandra Bose remarked, "Within a week almost everybody who was somebody in the Congress Party was in prison".²

Searches of the Congress Party offices and residences of leaders and confiscation of property were also resorted to by the government. The office of the Guntur District Congress Committee and the houses of Maddi Venkata; Rangayya, Tallavajjula Sivasankara Swamy, Jonnalagadda Ramalingayya, K. Suryanarayana Murty, Ch. Bhavayya Chowdari and Kalluri Chandramouli were searched.³

When convicts refused to pay fines, their property was seized. Ghalib Saheb of Guntur was fined for taking part in the movement. When he refused to pay the fine imposed on him, the wooden tables of his brother's laundry were seized by the police.⁴

The police did not spare even young boys when they were round helping the movement in any way. In Ongole, Gudimella Thiru Vengadacharyulu, an young boy of 14 years, when found distributing political leaflets was seized by a police constable, and was brutally belaboured.⁵

1. Ramachandruni Venkatappa's article "Ongolu Taluka lo Bahumukha Jateeya Chaitanyamu" in Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika (Ongole 1972), p. 130.

2. Subhas Chandra Bose : Op. cit. p. 334.

3. The Hindu dated January 11, 1932.

4. The Hindu dated January 12, 1932.

5. The Hindu dated February 26 1932.

6. Ramachandruni Venkatappa's article "Ongolu Taluka lo Bahumukha Jateeya Chaitanyamu" in Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika (Ongole 1972), p. 131.

When the government repression was in full swing the Congress managed to hold the annual session in the month of April, 1932 under the Clock Tower in Chandni Chowk, Delhi. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was the President-elect of the Congress. But as he was arrested en route, the Congress was presided over by Seth Ranchhoddas Amritlal of Ahmadabad. The Congress passed resolutions reiterating complete independence as the goal of the Congress, whole-heartedly endorsing the revival of civil disobedience, congratulating the nation on its splendid response to Gandhi's call and reaffirming the faith in the non-violence even in the face of acts of grave provocation from the authorities.¹ In spite of police vigilance five hundred delegates attended the Delhi Congress.²

The Guntur district sent the highest contingent from the Andhra districts. The responsibility of selecting the delegates and sending them safely to Delhi was entrusted to Dr. Amancherla Sesha Chalapatirao.³ The delegates that participated in the Delhi Congress from the Guntur district were Konda Venkatappayya, his private secretary Subbaramayya, Uppala Krishnayya, Muvva Audinarayana, Koppalli Ramachandrarao, Unnava Lakshmibayamma,⁴ Madabhushi Vedantam Narasimhacharyulu, Gullipalli Ramakrishnayya and Boddapati Subbarao.⁵ The delegates had to suffer various privations during their journey. They had to change trains, identity and dress, and devise various other ways to reach the venue. Those that ultimately reached Chandni

1. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : Op. cit. Vol-I, p. 531.

2. Ibid.

3. Boddapati Subbarao's article "1932 Satyagrahamu : Swatanthrodyamamu Nati Na Smrutulu" in Krishna Patrika dated September 16, 1972, pp. 7, 17.

4. The Hindu dated April 27, 1932.

5. Boddapati Subbarao's article "1932 Satyagrahamu : Swatanthrodyamamu nati na smrutulu" in Krishna Patrika dated September 16, 1972. p. 17.

Chowk were arrested and lodged in Delhi District Jail for twenty days. ¹

COMMUNAL AWARD AND ITS EFFECTS

When the national struggle for freedom was in full swing the country heard the news that Gandhi was going on fast unto death against the Communal Award announced by the British Prime Minister, Ramsay Macdonald. Gandhi regarded the creation of separate electorate for Harijans "as the thin end of the wedge for separating these classes from the Hindu fold" ² Unnava Lakshminarayana, great champion of the removal of untouchability, undertook a sympathetic fast in Guntur. ³

However, the fast of Gandhi caused consternation throughout the country. Leaders of all political parties like Rajagopalachari, Jayakar, Sapru, Malaviya and others held prolonged discussions with Dr. Ambedkar. An agreement known as the Poona Pact was concluded by which joint electorates were restored subject to certain conditions. Gandhi who began his fast in the Yerawada Jail on September 20, 1932 broke it on September 26th. ⁴

SUSPENSION OF THE MOVEMENT

Gandhi was released on May 8, 1933. On the same day he issued a statement recommending the suspension of the civil disobedience. The Acting President of the Congress in obedience to his wishes suspended the movement at first for six months and extended it for a further period of six weeks. Ultimately after a meeting

1. Ibid.

2. Edward D' Cruz, S. J. *India: the quest for Nationhood* (Bombay 1967), p. 93.

3. *The Hindu* dated September 21, 1932.

4. D. G. Tendulkar: *Op. cit.* p. 198

of Congress workers in Poona on July 12, 1933, mass civil disobedience was discontinued and only individual civil disobedience was permitted.¹ Viewed even from the national point the individual civil disobedience "passed away unnoticed into the limbo of oblivion".² In these circumstances, the Working Committee of the Congress held sittings at Patna on May 18, 19 and 20, 1934. It recommended the adoption of the Council-entry programme. It suspended civil disobedience and called upon all the Congressmen to abide by the decision.³ The Congressmen of the Guntur district obeyed this directive along with those of the whole country. The civil disobedience movement stood suspended on May 20, 1934.⁴ Thus the struggle for full independence that started in the first week of January 1930 was terminated on May 20, 1934. At the height of the movement 191 persons were convicted in the Guntur district under the Special Powers Ordinance, the highest in the Andhra districts.⁵

1. Jagadish Sharma : Op. cit. p. 113.

2. R. C. Mujuandar : Op. cit. Vol-III, p. 483.

3. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : Op. cit. Vol-I, p. 572.

4. Ibid.

5. Inspector General of Police, Madras to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras Madras dated August 17, 1932. Letter No. 2494-SB-32.

(A.P. State Archives, II, P.S. Section)

Final Phase of the Freedom Movement

PEASANTS' AND WORKERS' UNIONS

After the suspension of the mass civil disobedience movement throughout the country on July 12, 1933 political activity in the Guntur district considerably slakened till the Government of India Act of 1935 came into force and Provincial Ministry was formed after the elections. However, even during this interregnum new political forces came to the fore which kept political activity live. One such was the Rama Needu Peasant Institute, inaugurated by Gandhi in Nidubrolu in January 1934. N. G. Ranga was the guiding spirit of this institute. He acted as the first Honorary Principal. Gandhi remarked, "How romantic to find a full-fledged Oxford Professor, placing his family property and his own services at the disposal of this institute? ¹ The Rama Needu Peasant Institute attracted the attention of the government as a centre of political activity. ² Nidubrolu became the seat of *Kisan* Publications under the guidance of G. L. Narayana and N. V. Subbayya. The first book to be brought out by this publishing house during this period was *Harijan Nayak* written by N. G. Ranga. ³

1. N. G. Ranga : *Fight for Freedom* (New Delhi, 1968), p. 163.

2. Government (Madras Fortnightly Report dated May 3, 1934.
(A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

3. N. G. Ranga : *Op cit* p. 164.

In addition to the peasants starting to organise themselves under the leadership of Ranga, the Communists, inspired by the Bolshevik achievements in Soviet Russia, began to show themselves up in the district. Since a ban had been imposed on the Communist activity in the country, the Communists changed the name of their party and formed the Labour Protection League in Guntur in March, 1935 and in Tenali in August 1935. Three Communists were active in the Labour Protection League of Guntur. They were P. Rama Subbayya, J. Ramalingayya and D. Krishna Murthy. In the year 1935 the Communists were active organising the workers of the Guntur town. They succeeded in organising Press Workers' Union, *Zutka* Drivers' Union and Jute Mill Workers' Union. They also published twelve pamphlets for which J. Ramalingayya, P. Rama Subbayya and D. Krishna Murthy were convicted, and sent to jail. The Communists in the Labour Protection League of Guntur tried to disseminate red literature in the whole district. ¹ The Labour Protection League was the real beginning of the Communist movement in the district which was to acquire mass base and strength in the succeeding years. In 1936 the Communists celebrated Labour Days and Anti-imperialist Days. ²

1937 ELECTIONS, INTERIM MINISTRY AND THE KOTHAPATNAM SUMMER SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICS

With the peasants and the workers making their first attempts to organise themselves into unions, the elections held for the Provincial Legislature of Madras under the Government of India Act of 1935, activated

1. Report submitted by the Superintendent of Police, Guntur, Special Branch, C.I.D. in reply to the Government Memo. No. 6-45-1-H-36 dated May 20, 1936, (A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

2. Ibid.

all the political sections in the district. In the elections held between 15th and 20th February, 1937 the Congress got overwhelming victory and the Justice Party was routed.¹ When the Governor of Madras invited C. Rajagopalachari, the Congress Legislature Party Leader, to form the ministry, the latter refused on the ground that the Governor had not assured him that he would not use special powers or that he would not set aside the advice of the ministers.² Thereupon, the Governor invited K. V. Reddy Naidu to form the ministry which he did on April 1, 1937. K. V. Reddy Naidu's Justice Party Ministry came to be known as Interim Ministry. It held office till July 14, 1937.

The Interim Ministry was averse to the national aspirations and progressive ideologies. The Congress Socialist Party, in which Communists joined, organised the Summer School of Economics and Politics in Kothapatnam, Ongole taluq from May 1, 1937. It attracted 170 students. Among them were Putchalapally Sundarayya, Kolla Venkayya, Makineni BasavaPunnayya, Vasireddy Sivalinga Prasad, Jonnalagadda Ramalingayya, Chimakurthi Sethumadhavarao and Pidathala Ranga Reddy. Indulal Yagnik, Swamy Sahajananda Saraswati, Prof. Ranga, Jaya Prakash Narayan, Achyut Patwardhan, Bottliwallah and other eminent left-oriented leaders gave lectures on important topics of politics and economics. In addition to lectures, the students were given training in military drill by Chandra Rajeswararao, techniques of guerilla warfare by Annapragada Kameswararao and the use of sword by Vijayaramaraju.³ This was too much for the loyalist government

1. G. O. No. 196 (Public) Election dated March 19, 1937 (A. P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section).

2. The Hindu dated May 27, 1937.

3. Ramachandrani Venkatappa's article "Ongole taluka lo Bahumukha Jateeya Chaitanyamu" in Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika. (Ongole, 1972, (Telugu), p. 18).

of K. V. Reddy Naidu to bear, and on May 18, 1937 it declared that the existence of the school was a threat to public peace. The Government Order stated among other things that "in the opinion of the Provincial Government the association known as the Summer School of Economics and Politics and Training Camp at Kothapatnam in the district of Guntur has for its object interference with the maintenance of law and order, and constitutes a danger to the public peace. Now, therefore, the Provincial Government are hereby pleased, in exercise of the powers conferred on them by Section 16 of the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908, to declare the said Summer School of Economics and Politics and Training Camp to be unlawful".¹ After declaring the school unlawful the government sent two van-loads of Reserve Police to the scene, and made a severe lathi charge on the students and teachers in which C. P. Elango, Vasireddy Sivalinga Prasad, Anna-pragada Kameswararao and others received serious injuries. Several arrests were also made.²

CONGRESS MINISTRY VIS-A-VIS THE GUNTUR DISTRICT

But, events moved fast which enabled the Congress to form the ministry in the Madras province. On June 22, 1937 the Viceroy of India Lord Linlithgow gave broadcast-message in which he stated that the Governor of the province was bound to "the executive authority on the advice of his Ministry". The Viceroy stated that the Governor could under the Act contrary to the advice

1. G. O. No. 951-6-5, Public dated May 18 1937.

(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

2. Ramachandruni Venkatappa's article "Ongole Taluka lo Bahumukha Jateeya Chitanyamu" in Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika.

(Ongole, 1972). p. 139

of the ministers. "But the scope of potential interference is strictly defined and there is no foundation for suggestion that a Governor is free, or is entitled, or would have the power, to interfere with the day-to-day administration of a province outside the limited range of the responsibilities especially confined to him".¹ The working committee of the Indian National Congress meeting between 5th and 8th of July, 1937 permitted the congressmen "to accept office in the provinces where the Congress commanded a majority in the Legislature....."² Thereupon, the Congress Ministry was formed in Madras on July 14, 1937 with C. Rajagopalachari as the Chief Minister. One of the early acts of Rajagopalachari's Ministry was to release all those, who were arrested and chargesheeted by the Interim Government in connection with the events of Kothapatnam summer school of Economics and Politics. But the order releasing the prisoners stated inter alia that the government would not tolerate such activities and would "take all steps necessary to prevent the dissemination of class hatred and ideas involving the use of organised and unorganised violence in furtherance of any object".³ This part of the order was not to the liking of the released prisoners or their sympathisers. It caused greater pain to them than the baton-charge made on them earlier by the Interim Government.⁴

The Congress Ministry received complaints from the Salt Department that the people of the Guntur district were misusing the provisions of the Gandhi - Irwin Pact

1. Marquess of Linlithgow: Speeches and Statements (1937-47) (New Delhi, 1945) p. 89.

2. Jagadish Sharma: Op. cit. Vol-I, p. 513.

3. The Hindu dated July 14, 1937.

4. The Hindu dated July 28, 1937.

5. Ramachandruni Venkatappa's article "Ongolu Taluka lo bahumukha Jateeya Chaitanyamu" in Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika, (Ongole, 1972), 129.

and that they were manufacturing greater amounts of salt than allowed and carrying them to distant places for sale. ¹ The Chief Minister, Government of Madras, wrote to Gollapudi Sitarama Sastry thus: "I have received complaints against the people who manufacture salt in Bapatla range from the officers of the Salt Department that they were abusing the privileges they were offered in connection with the manufacture of salt. Please enquire into the matter". ² Thereupon, the Guntur District Congress Committee met on July 27, 1938 and appointed a sub-committee with Gollapudi Sitarama Sastry (convenor), Sagi Vijayaramaraju, Neti Venkata Chalapati, Kudipudi Pundarikakshayya and Kalluri Chandra Mouli to enquire into the matter and take necessary steps. Vijayaramaraju visited all the salt-beds of the Ongole taluq and enquired into the complaints. He explained to the people all the terms of the agreement reached at by Gandhi and Irwin, and appealed to them not to violate any one of the terms. Boddupalli Venkata Subbayya and Kudipudi Pundarikakshayya did similar work in Bapatla and Repalle taluqs respectively. ³

In *zamindari* areas the ryots over-burdened with land taxes. To set it right a Zamindari Enquiry Committee was constituted by the Madras Government with T. Prakasam, Revenue Minister, as its Chairman. To assist this enquiry committee the Guntur D.C.C. appointed a sub-committee with Sagi Vijayaramaraju and Gundlapalli Audinarayana. This committee toured all the zamindari areas of the Ongole taluq explaining to the ryots the purpose and efforts of the enquiry. The

1. Annual Report of the Guntur District Congress Committee 1938-39.

(The report is available in the Andhra Pradesh State Archives, Hyderabad in type-script).

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

sub-committee prepared all the statements required for the government enquiry. Some leading ryots were taken to Madras to give evidence before Zamindari Enquiry Committee. ¹

During their period of office two Congress Ministers-Bezawada Gopalareddy, Minister for Local Self-Government and Tanguturi Prakasam, Minister for Revenue made extensive tour of the urban and rural areas of the district and took notice of public grievances and complaints. ²

These events show that there was considerable rapport between the Guntur District Congress and the Provincial Congress Ministry. At the same time the District Congress did not give up its ultimate objectful independence for the country. It appointed Vavilala Gopalakrishnayya to propagate among the people that the ideal of the Congress was complete independence, and that it would strive to achieve it. Gopalakrishnayya undertook an extensive tour of the district between June and August 1939 and educated the people on Congress history, national aspirations, wars and their effects. In his tour Gopalakrishnayya was assisted by Patibandla Suryanarayana Roy and Putta Ramadass. ³

During this period the Congress engaged itself in the amelioration of social and political backwardness of the Harijans. The Congressmen of the Guntur District Harijan Service Society- *Gunturu Zilla Harijana Sevaka Sangham*- did substancial work for the betterment of the Harijans. They ran schools and hostels for Harijans in

1. Ibid.

2. Tenali Taluka Congress Committee Report- 11-4-38 to 11-4-39 (Tenali, 1939) (Telugu) pp. 7, 8.

3. Vavilala Gopalakrishnayya : *Jateeya Vanehha* (Guntur, 1939) (Telugu) pp. 5 to 7.

Guntur, Pedanandipadu, Sattenapalli, Gurajala, Santhanutalapadu and Alapadu. :

WORLD WAR II AND THE INDIVIDUAL SATYAGRAHA

The year 1939 was remarkable for an event which changed the course of the world history. On September 3, 1939 Britain declared war on Germany, and the World War II started. Without the consent of the Indian leaders India was dragged into the war as an appendage of Britain. Though the Congress leaders were opposed to German Nazi and Italian Fascist philosophies, which stood for ruthless totalitarianism and racialist bigotry, they stated that India would have nothing to do with an imperialist war. The Guntur District Congress Committee categorically declared that India's resources in men and material should not be used in the pursuit of a war which had an imperialist character.² It was in confirmity with the All India Congress Committee policy. The parliamentary Sub-Committee instructed the Congress Ministers in the provinces to tender resignations.³ In accordance with this resolution the provincial Ministers resigned one after another, Madras leading with its resignation on October 28, 1939.⁴

With the attitude of the government unchanged, the struggle for independence was soon to begin under the guidance of Gandhi. This time Gandhi did not think of mass civil disobedience. He decided that the campaign should be limited to select individuals. In October 1940 the individual civil disobedience started. Vinoba Bhave

1. Gunturu Zilla Harijana Sevaka Sangham Report (1-10-39 to 30-9-40)
Guntur, 1940; (Telugu), pp. 3 to 6.

2. Gunturu Zilla Congress Committee : Yuddhamu-Congress (Report) (Year and place of publication not mentioned) (Telugu) p. 3.

3. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : *Op. cit.* Vol-II, p. 141.

4. *Ibid* p 142.

was selected by Gandhi to be the first *satyagrahi*. The campaign was opened at Paunaur on October 17, 1940, when Vinoba Bhave made a public speech in which he preached the Congress war policy and exhorted the people not to help the government in their war effort, as all war was immoral and bad. For this he was arrested and sentenced to three months imprisonment.¹ The Ongole Municipal Council meeting on October 31, 1940 condemned "the action of the Government in arresting Sri Vinoba Bhave who is fighting for freedom of speech".²

The individual *satyagraha* started on October 17, 1940 and continued till the end of 1941.³ During this period as many as 119 individuals offered *satyagraha* in the Guntur district. Among them were eight women.⁴

Gandhi directed Congressmen to march on foot towards Delhi, explaining to the people the Congress war policy, as they marched.⁵ In response to this call some *satyagrahis* of the Guntur district toured many villages and towns, and carried the Congress gospel to the people during their march to Delhi in February 1941.⁶

During the individual *satyagraha* movement Konda Venkatappayya, Neti Chalapathi, G. Subrahmanya Sastry and K. Sampath Kumarachari toured the villages and enthused the *satyagrahis*.⁷

1 R. R. Diwakar: *Op. cit.* pp. 82, 83.

2 G. O. No. 364 Public (Confidential) dated February 21, 1941, Madras Government. (A. P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

3 R. R. Diwakar: *Op. cit.* p. 84.

4 The list of 119 *satyagrahis* is filed in the A. P. State Archives, Hyderabad. The list is authorised by Mantena Venkataraju of the Guntur District Congress Committee. (A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

5 R. R. Diwakar: *Op. cit.* p. 85.

6 The Hindu dated February 20, 1941.

7 The Hindu dated July 26, 1941.

Arrest warrants were issued against Pulupula Sivayya, Annapragada Kameswararao and Jonnalagadda Ramalingayya under the Defence of India Rules. But they went under-ground and evaded arrest. The government announced a reward of Rs. 100/- for anyone who would give information leading to the arrest of anyone of them. ¹

QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT AND THE AUGUST REVOLT

The war in Europe reached its climax in 1941. Germany having overrun Poland, Belgium, Holland, Norway and France launched a surprise attack on Russia in June 1941. In December, Japan, Germany's ally in Asia, made an attack on Pearl Harbour. The Japanese War machine grabbed Phillippines, Indo-China, Indonesia, Malaya, Singapore and Burma in quick succession. By March 1942 Japanese were at the very gates of India. It was one of the bleakest periods for Britain. She was desperately in need of India's full and active cooperation in war. So the British government sent Sir Stafford Cripps to India with a Draft Declaration.

The Draft Declaration promised Dominion Status immediately after the war ended. It also gave India the right of succession. A Constituent Assembly would be set up after the termination of war. In the Assembly representatives of both British India and Native States would take part. Any province, if it so desired, could remain outside the Indian Union. During the War the defence of the country would be looked after by the British Commander-in-chief, though there would be an Indian Defence Minister. ² The proposals of Cripps were rejected by all political parties. Gandhi told Sir

1. The Hindu dated December 12, 1941.

2. The Draft Declaration is quoted in Jagdish Sarma's India's Struggle for Freedom (New Delhi, 1962) pp. 592, 593.

Stafford: "If this is your entire proposal to India, I would advise you to take the next plane home".¹

The failure of the Cripps Mission, the success of the Japanese in South-East Asia and the presence of the Japanese forces at the very gates of India wrought great change in the attitude of the Congress. The Congress Working Committee met in July 1942 and passed the resolution calling upon Britain to withdraw from India. If the appeal failed, the resolution stated, they would take all non-violent steps for the realisation of political rights and liberty under the leadership of Gandhi.² The All-India Congress Committee, meeting in Bombay on August 7th and 8th, 1942 endorsed this action. It passed the famous Quit India Resolution. The Committee resolved to start "a mass struggle on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilise all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last 22 years of peaceful struggle".³ With the passing of this resolution, the government moved with lightning speed. Gandhi and all the members of the Working Committee were spirited away. All Congress Committees were declared unlawful, and all leaders in all provinces were arrested.⁴

When the leaders at all levels - national, provincial, district and taluq - were jailed the people's passion raged high. Every individual and group, bereft of leadership and guidance acted in the way they thought best.

The August revolt was on, and the Guntur district was one of the principal centres of the revolt. Railway stations, telephone and telegraph offices and other government offices became the special targets of mob

1. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : *Op. cit.* Vol-II, p. 317.

2. *Ibid* p. 312.

3. Quoted in R. R. Diwakar's *Satyagraha, the Power of Truth* (Hinsdale, Illinois, 1968), p. 84.

4. M. V. Ramarao : *Op. cit.* p. 222.

fury. The revolt was not confined only to the urban areas. The villagers joined the fray and brought the government to naught. The incidents in Tenali, Chirala, Guntur and Nidubrole deserve special mention.

When the news of the Quit India Resolution and the arrest of all the prominent leaders reached Tenali, the people were fired by "patriotic emotionalism provoking even the peace-loving-non-political individuals to act in their own way for the success of what was generally believed the last and the final struggle to throw off the foreign yoke." ¹ In the early hours of August 12, 1942 a handful of local town Congressmen started a procession from one corner of the eastern part of the town. The procession marched towards the southern side shouting nationalist slogans, attracting large groups of people into it. By the time it reached the Taluk High School it was more than a thousand strong. On hearing the inspiring slogans the students, nearely one thousand, abruptly left the classes in the flash of a moment and joined the procession. When this "stream" of people reached the Gandhi Chowk the leaders of the procession were in a "mental conflict" - whether to erupt on the Taluk Office, local sub-jail and the police station or to turn their wrath on the railway station. Already the labourers of the rice mills in Morrispet joined the procession with their crude weapons like crowbars. At this juncture "the saner elements" prevailed and diverted the course of the procession to the railway station. ²

Here is the government account of what happened at the Tenali railway station. The processionists "asked the Station Master and the staff to vacate the premises.

1. Signed statement of L. Mukteswararao, Retired Headmaster, Municipal High School, Tenali.

2. Ibid.

Then they demolished a Booking Office, set fire to the Station Master's room and the Refreshment Hall and burnt the records and furniture. They also set fire to the Train Examiners' Office, where oil was stored for use in the railway engines. The Puri Passenger from Madras was stopped outside the station by tampering with the semaphore of the outer signal. Passengers were made to detrain and some of the carriages were set on fire with Kerosene oil brought from the station." ¹ There was one English passenger in the first class compartment of the Puri Express. The mob did not contemplate physical harm to the White passenger. ²

The demonstrators saw to it that telephone and telegraph links with the district head-quarters town-Guntur-were snapped. But they did not know that telephone link between the Public Works Department and Guntur was intact. Somehow the local authorities managed to send information to the District Collector. Here is an eye-witness account of the arrival of the District Collector and the Reserve Police in Tenali, their confrontation with the furious mob and the subsequent police firing: It was 12-30 P. M. The crowds having caused the greatest possible havoc in the railway station now were swarming into the Morrispet centre, the present bus-stand area. The Armed Reserve was on the main street in the south. The crowds were in an excited and emotional temperament biding their time to overrun the Armed Reserve. The Collector used his utmost tact and restraint, and tried to persuade the crowd to disperse. But the crowds were in no mood to relent..... In the meanwhile P. Raghavayya, a local lawyer and a member of the War Council went into the

1. G. O. No. 1013, Public (General) dated April 9, 1943. Calendar events of Civil Disobedience Movement: August - December, 1942.

(A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

2. Signed statement of L. Mukteswararao.

crowds to prevail on them to disperse. Even when he was still in the crowds, the situation worsened. When it seemed that the crowds were making a determined bid to advance on the Reserve Police the Collector yet quite reluctantly ordered the police to open fire. P. Raghavayya, who was engaged in..... pacifying the people, was injured'' along with a number of other people. ¹

According to the government account twenty one rounds of ammunition were fired. The casualties were six killed and eleven injured. ²

Shortly after the incident at the railway station a crowd attacked the P. W. D. Wharf Station. In the evening Section 144 Cr. P. C. was promulgated. ³ Later the government made many arrests under various sections of the Defence of India Rules. ⁴

On the same day i.e., August 12, wild scenes were enacted in Chirala and Bapatla also. A procession of 500 students in Chirala caused damage to the Court of the Sub-Magistrate and raided the Offices of the Sub-Registrar and Sale Tax and then stoned the Police Station. The procession then swelled to 1500 strong. The processionists then went to the railway station and attacked the cabin, cut the telephone and the signal wires. With great difficulty the goods shed was saved from being set fire to. The damage caused to the railway property at Chirala was estimated at Rs. 1,00,000/-.

1. Ibid

2. G. O. No. 1718 Public (General) dated April 9, 1943.

Calendar events of Civil Disobedience Movement: August-December, 1942.

(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section).

3. Ibid

4. Khan Sahib Md. Abdul Aziz Sahib Bahadur, District Magistrate, Guntur to the Chief Secretary, Government of Madras, Public (General) Re. 1150 confidential - 4, C-1 dated May 29, 1944.

(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

In Bapatia the excited mobs attacked the railway station, broke insulators and telegraph posts and damaged telephone equipment. ¹ Earlier the mobs attacked the court of the Subordinate Judge. Kappagantula Ramachandra-rao occupied the seat of the Sub-judge and declared the town a Free Town and the court a Free Court. ²

On August 13 students and other youngsters numbering about 2,000 gathered as a riotous mob, and threw stones at the police in Guntur. A lathi charge was made without any effect. A number of constables received injuries on account of "violent stone throwing". When the mob advanced towards the Reserve Party "in a menacing attitude" the order to open fire was given. In all twenty rounds were fired, killing two and injuring twelve. ³

The August Revolt was not confined only to the urban areas of the Guntur district. The rural parts were considerably excited and the railway stations and the government offices became the targets of mob fury at many places. From August to December there were violent incidents in various places like Chiruvur, Duggirala, Sangam Jagarlamudi, Appapuram, Uppulur etc. The railway lines were tampered with and the government had to press into service "a company of the Cameronian Highlanders" in order to patrol the railway lines. ⁴

GOVERNMENT'S COUNTER MEASURES

The government resorted to levying collective fines upon people near and about the places, where railway

1 G. O. No. 1913. Public (General) dated April 9, 1943. Calendar events of Civil Disobedience Movement - August-December, 1942.

(A. P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

2. Unpublished diaries of Mantena Venkataraju.

3 G. O. No. 1913. Public (General) dated April 9, 1943. Calendar events of Civil Disobedience Movement - August-December, 1942.

4. Ibid

property or government offices were destroyed. According to G. O. No 1013, Public (General) dated 9-4-1943 showing the "Calendar of events of Civil Disobedience Movement of August - December 1942" an amount of Rs. 3,21,681 was imposed as collective fine in the Guntur district upto December 31, 1942. This was the highest amount collected in the Andhra districts.¹ The government, however, in case of some villages like Pittalavaripalem, Mantenavaripalem, Allur and their hamlets exempted all government servants, retired government servants, non-resident land-holders and persons who gave information leading to the arrest of offenders from the apportionment of the fines.²

Though the Guntur district was largely wedded to the ideal of non-violence in its fight for national freedom some attempts to manufacture bombs were made in the Guntur district. Three country bombs were blasted in the Guntur town. In these incidents the damage caused was little, offenders could not be traced and the cases were declared undetectable.³ In Ongole, Chimakurthi Seshagirirao, Ravinuthala Venkateswarlu, Mudivarthi Satyanarayana and Vemuri Venkata Subbayya manufactured a country bomb to destroy the record room of the District Munsiff Court on January 26, 1943. But as it was mishandled, it exploded and caused injuries to Ravinuthala Venkateswarlu and Vemuri Venkata Subbayya. The latter was sentenced to one and half years imprisonment. Chimakurthi Seshagirirao and Mudivarthi Satyanarayana went underground, and when the Prakasam Ministry was formed in 1946 arrest

1. M. Venkatarangaiya. Op. cit Vol-IV, p. 165.

2. G. O. No 21-4 Public (General) Department dated October 26, 1942.
(A. P. State Archives, II, F. S. Section)

3. Khan Saheb Md. Abdul Aziz Saheb Bahadur, District Magistrate, Guntur to the Chief Secretary, Government of Madras. Public (General) Rc. 1150 confidential-43 C-1 dated May 29, 1943.
(A. P. State Archives, II, F. S. Section)

warrants against them were withdrawn.¹ Kadiyala Yanadayya, a prominent leader of the Ongole taluq was taken to the police station for interrogation in connection with the Ongole Bomb Case. It appears B. Subbarao Naidu, the police officer, during the course of interrogation lost temper and kicked Yanadayya at the most sensitive part of his body. Yanadayya fell to the ground dead. This happened on February 12, 1943.²

The government blamed Gandhi and the Congress for the violent incidents of the Quit India Movement. In its communique the government stated that "the damage done was so extensive as to make it incredible that it could have been perpetrated on the spur of the movement without special implements and previous preparation; and in many instances the manner in which it was done displayed a great deal of technical knowledge".³ Gandhi disclaimed all responsibility, and decided to go on fast for 21 days "in vindication of truth and justice".⁴ The fast commenced on February 10, 1943.⁵ The whole country was plunged into deep anxiety, as Gandhi had undertaken the fast at the advanced age of 74. The Bar Association of Narasaraopet meeting on February 17, 1943 passed the resolution which stated: "This meeting expresses its deep concern over the fast of Mahatma Gandhi and requests the government to release him immediately and unconditionally so as to enable him to examine the situation in the country. 'de novo' and devise ways and means of ending the

1. Ramachandruni Venkatappa's article "Ongolu Taluka lo Bahumukha Jateeya Chaitanyamu" in Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika, pp. 146 to 151.

2. Ibid pp. 152, 153.

B. Subbarao Naidu became notorious as Dappula Subbarayudu. 'Dappula' is a Telugu term which means country drums. Subbarao used to disturb congress meetings by beating 'Dappulu'.

See Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika, pp. 147-148.

3. Quoted in R. C. Majumdar's *History of Freedom Movement in India*, Vol-III (Calcutta, 1962), p. 488.

4. J. M. Deb: *Blood and Tears* (Bombay 1945), p. 72.

5. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya: *Op cit* Vol-II, p. 481.

present impasse as expressed by him in his letter to the Viceroy. This meeting further requests the Government to make use of the services offered by Mahatmaji in the task of forming a National Government forthwith to fight Fascist powers".¹ "Gandhi's spirit triumphed over the flesh, and he emerged unscathed from the hazards of foodless weeks".² He broke his fast on March 3, 1943,³ and the nation heaved a sigh of relief.

TRANSFER OF POWER

The August revolt was the culmination of the Indian freedom movement, and the close of 1943 marked practically the end of the movement in the Guntur district. After 1943 it was only a matter of determination of the mechanics of the transfer of power, over which the district did not have any control or influence. The district did not have any bearing on the subsequent stages of the freedom movement like the formation of the Indian National Army, the revolt of the Royal Indian Navy (February, 1946), the Cabinet Mission (March, 1946), the Interim Government and the direct action by the Muslim League for the vivi-section of the country into India and Pakistan except that three persons from the Guntur district - P. R. Bavaji, Shaik Silar and Kothapalli Peter - joined the Indian National Army of Subhas Chandra Bose.⁴

However during this period, considerable constructive work was done in the Guntur district. A training camp was started in 1945 at Vinayacramam for spreading basic education.⁵ Due to war prices of essential

1. S. P. Thompson, Registrar, High Court of Judicature, Madras to the Secretary, Home Department, Government of Madras dated September 8, 1944.
(A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section.)

2. V. B. Kulkarni : British Dominion in India and After (Bombay, 1964), O. 238.

3. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya : Op. cit. Vol-II, p. 479.

4. Signed statement of P. R. Bavaji.

5. Fortnightly report of the District Magistrate, Guntur dated July 13, 1945.
(A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section.)

commodities skyrocketed. The Congressmen and the Communists formed United People's Food Committees and worked for proper distribution of grain.¹ The district Communists who worked clandestinely in 1935 under the name of the Labour Protection League, came overground and acquired considerable following among the agricultural labourers, youth, students and the factory workers between 1943 and 1947. They carried on agitation against corrupt officials, organised famine-relief-work, agitated for control over essential commodities and collected food and money for the famine-stricken in Bengal.²

Though the Guntur District Muslim League was formed in December 1945,³ the district was free from communal virus. The District Collector reported that "there were no clashes between the Hindus and the Muslims".⁴

MOUNTBATTEN PLAN AND THE DAWN OF INDEPENDENCE

A war weary Britain under the Prime Ministership of Clement Attlee sent Lord Louis Mountbatten to arrange transfer of power. As the Muslim League mounted up pressure for the creation of Pakistan, the Congress had no option but to accept the plan of the new Viceroy, which provided for two separate dominions - India and Pakistan. The British Parliament passed the Indian

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1. Madala Veerabhadrarao - Gunturu Zilla Aahara Samanya (Place of publication not mentioned, 1947) (Telugu). p. 9.
 2. Nalgava Gunturu Zilla Communistu Mahasabha Report (Place and year of publication not mentioned) (Telugu) pp. 11, 12.
 3. Ibid. p. 25.
 4. S. M. Hussain, District Magistrate, Guntur to the Registrar High Court of Judicature Madras dated December 19, 1945.
(A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

Independence Bill on July 15, 1947, and on August 15, 1947 India became independent.

August 15, 1947 was a day of rejoicing for the people of the Guntur district, who contributed not a little to the freedom movement. The day was marked by *prabhat pheris*, processions, flag hoistings and public meetings. It was in the fitness of things that the freedom fighters gathered at the house of Konda Venkatappayya to celebrate the day with eclat. ¹

1. Madala Veerabhadrarao : Desabhakta Jeevita Charitra (Machilipatnam 1966)
(Telugu), p. 176

Review and Conclusions

GUNTUR DISTRICT IN THE LEAD

The Guntur district was in the forefront of the freedom movement among the Andhra districts, since Gandhi took command of the Indian National Congress after its Calcutta Special Session in September, 1920. Before the emergence of Gandhi on the national scene there had been sporadic anti-British incidents in the Guntur district like the Kottappakonda riot of 1909, when Chinappareddy made supreme sacrifice with the full throated cry of 'Vande Mataram' and the Tenali Bomb blast of the same year in which several people were sent to jail to serve various terms. Delegates had enthusiastically participated in the annual sessions of the Congress. The Guntur District Congress Committee also had been one of the earliest in Andhra. The District had made its impact felt on the Home Rule League too. But the manifestation of anti-British feeling or action should not be mistaken for a scientific approach to the national question. As a matter of fact, the Indian National Congress acquired that scientific approach with the emergence of Gandhi as its undisputed leader. The district with the rest of the country under his leadership waged a relentless war till it achieved on August 15, 1947 what she had set out to do in September 1920.

During the non-cooperation days the district was ahead of other Andhra districts. There were also incidents and episodes which had not been enacted in any other part of the country. The whole population of a town - Chirala - Peral - evacuated their hearths and homes and braving burning heat and biting cold resided in mud and palmyra huts for full eleven months, and refused to be ruled against their will. It is hard to quote any other incident from the history of the Indian freedom struggle involving whole communities presenting such determined opposition to the alien rule and its unpopular acts of commission and omission. Even before no-tax campaign was experimented anywhere the district came forward and showed the way. The accounts of Harris and Rutherford, officials sent by the government in the Fort St. George to deal with the situation arising out of the no-tax campaign in the Guntur district, show the solidarity of the masses and the leadership, the singleness of purpose and broad avenues which the district opened for the freedom fighters elsewhere. The government felt totally isolated during the campaign. This the local leadership and their following achieved without assistance from the national leadership. Some of the local leaders mused that had Gandhi come down to the district and guided the movement, they would have achieved greater successes. ¹

During the non-cooperation days it was not in the rich delta regions alone that the freedom movement was in high pitch. The not-too-rich and the not-too-literate uplands of Palnad were also considerably awakened. The Palnad Forest Satyagraha waged in such remote corners like Veldurthy, Jangameswarapuram and Minchalapadu amply proves this.

1. Ramachandruni Venkatappa's article "Ongolu Talukalo Bahumukha Jateeya Chaitanyamu" in Gundlapalli Audinarayana Shastipurthi Sanchika. p. 117.

Either in intensity or in initiative the Guntur district was the pace-setter during the non-cooperation movement. The District Collector had to accept that he saw Swaraj established around him. One can understand his plight. Social boycott of the government officials was complete and thorough. He could neither secure food nor transport. He felt completely ostracised. Rutherford could not get the services of even one person in Pedanandipadu to guide him to the police-post.

It can safely be said that 1922 is 'annus mirabilis' in the history of national movement in the Guntur district. It received all-India attention, and the government had to devise various ways to mow down the spirit of the people.

In the subsequent stages of the freedom struggle like the salt satyagraha, 1932 civil disobedience and the August revolt of 1942 the Guntur district was ahead of other Telugu districts. The Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras reported to the government of India that during the salt satyagraha the Guntur district was the worst effected in the Madras presidency, as it was during the non-cooperation movement of 1921.¹ The pace of the movement was so quick that the district administration could not cope up with the situation. When promulgation of Section 144 Cr. P. C., whole-sale arrests, raids on sibirams and lathi charges failed to mow down people, the administration became jittery, and fell heavily on even token symbols of the Congress. The result was the banning of the Gandhi cap which brought the administration odium from far and near. During the August revolt of 1942 the district

1 C. B. Cotterell, C. I. E., I. C. S., Acting Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to the Secretary to the Government of India, Public Department Letter No 744-S dated August 1, 1930

(A P State Archives H. F. S. Section)

did not lag behind. According to the 'Calendar of events of Civil Disobedience Movement August - December 1942' prepared by the Madras Government, Guntur district was "the storm centre among the Andhra districts".¹

FORCES BEHIND THE DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

What then were the forces that pushed the Guntur district to the fore in the Andhra districts in all movements and the country in the non-cooperation movement during the national struggle for independence?

The pioneering activity of the missionaries in the educational field and the subsequent establishment of a number of educational institutions by the government and the philanthropic public on western lines brought about early political awakening in the district. Even as far back as the year 1913 Vinjamuri Bhavanacharyulu could enumerate 1770 schools attended by 17,234 students.² With these educational institutions with A. E. L. M. College at their apex the Guntur district gained political lead. With the rapid strides made in education the people came to grips with the exploitative character of British imperialism. Analysing the 1932 movement in the Guntur district, particularly Tenali, the District Magistrate refers to "the fairly widespread literacy "and the educated" rural ryot class which developed a taste for..... news-paper reading". He says that *Andhra Patrika* was read daily "in almost every village". That was why the area under his jurisdiction had at least "ten years of history of anti-Government agitation."³

1. G. O. No. 1913 Public (General) Madras Government dated April 4, 1943.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

2. Presidential address of Vinjamuri Bhavanacharyulu in the 23rd Guntur District Conference held at Ongole on 4-5-1914 p. 6.

3. Guntur District Magistrate to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated May 3, 1932.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

The establishment of a large number of educational institutions brought into existence a new power in politics - the power of the students community - which supplied to the leadership much combustible material for agitation. The students learnt their first lessons in political agitation during the non-cooperation days. Boycott of government schools and colleges and the establishment of national educational institutions on which Gandhi had laid stress evoked much response in the district. A good number of teachers also resigned and the effect of their sacrifice on the students cannot be underestimated. The principals of the Andhra Christian College like Rev. Strock and Dr. Sipes were not averse to the national aspirations of the Indians. During the 1921 movement there were student strikes on a massive scale. Many students left campuses and became whole-timers in the national struggle for independence. The national schools started in the district served as nurseries of patriots. This new found power of the students unfolded itself with greater vigour during the subsequent stages of the freedom movement. When the Congress gave "Quit India" call to the British and when leaders at all levels - national, provincial and local - were jailed, the students joined the excited mobs and in a frenzy of fury made government offices and railway stations the targets of their attack. Highly emotional as they were enthused by leaders, touched to the quick by the British attitudes to India and the Indians and inspired by the national movements in America, Italy and Ireland a large student body in the district plunged into the national movement and kept up its tempo.

Economic prosperity brought the people a certain amount of leisure by which they exercised themselves in political activities. Prof. M. Venkatarangaiya says: "It is only when the prosperity of a people shows signs of growth that revolutionary movements emerge". He

opines that constant preoccupation with the necessities of life would often result in the withdrawal from any important kinds of activities unrelated to staying alive.¹ The District Magistrate in his report on the civil disobedience movement refers to this aspect. He says: "Cultivation being predominantly that of paddy gives the ryot atleast six months leisure in the year".² The result was his active participation in the movement.

Economic prosperity coupled with advancement in education gave Guntur district among the Andhra districts leadership in the national movement for independence.

WHAT CLASSES AND WHAT COMMUNITIES?

In the Guntur district it was the Brahmin community that was in the forefront of the freedom movement during the non-cooperation days. Konda Venkatappayya, Gollapudi Sitaramasastry, Unnava Lakshminarayana, N. V. L. Narasimharao and Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya were all Brahmins and were the first to respond to the clarion call of Gandhi to boycott government institutions. It was they who were in the forefront and led the non-cooperation movement. It was understandable. The Brahmins were the first to receive education on western lines. Prof. M. Venkata Rangaiya says, "for ages they were the only educated community in South India. They had a monopoly of learning and scholarship..... Brought up in such a tradition they were the first to resort to the system of English education.....The other communities took to English education much

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1. M. Venkatarangaiya's article 'Sociology of the Freedom Movement in Andhra' in *Itihasa Journal of the Andhra Pradesh Archives*. Vol-I, No. 1, p. 165.
 2. Guntur District Magistrate to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated May 11, 1932
(A. P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section).

later. It is this time factor that is responsible for the Brahmins community leading the movement." ¹

During the subsequent stages of the freedom struggle, as education made rapid strides among all sections, economically stronger castes came to the forefront politically. The Government of Madras concluded that in the 1932 movement the Kamma caste had been "specially prominent in hostility to the Government" and had "provided more than one leader and a considerable proportion of the rank and file....." ²

Important groups of Reddis, Telagas, Rajus and Velamas also enthusiastically participated in the 1930 and 1932 movements. ³

Vysyas were traditionally conservative and were wholly wedded to their profession - business. But they also participated in the movement since the non-cooperation days. The various hartals that the district witnessed might not have been possible but for their cooperation and assistance. During the non-cooperation days the Vysyas themselves came forward in Guntur and decided not to trade in foreign cloth incurring considerable financial loss. When picketing was at its height in Tenali, merchants themselves closed their shops in good grace and went home. The Vysyas also came forward to donate towards the Tilak Swaraj Fund. Konda Venkatappayya ⁴ and the government ⁵ advance

1. M. Venkatarangaiya's article 'Sociology of the Freedom Movement in Andhra' in Itihas Journal of the Andhra Pradesh Archives - Vol-I, No. 1, p. 16.
2. Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department dated May 12, 1932 - Letter No. MS 736 (S. 17) (A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)
3. Guntur District Magistrate to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated May , 1932.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)
4. Konda Venkatappayya. (Op. cit. p. 253)
5. Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras to the Secretary to the Government of India Home Department dated May 12 1932 - Letter No. MS 736 (S. 17) (A.P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

identical explanation for the active participation of the Vysya community in freedom movement. As Gandhi was a Vysya, they developed a sentimental attachment to him and to his causes.

Whosoever was in the leadership the people rose above narrow communal and caste feeling and wholeheartedly fought the alien government. The Justice Party, a loyalist non-Brahmin party, did not make any impact on the district political life. Though the Justice Party indentified itself as a non-Brahmin party, non-Brahmin leaders and the masses never associated themselves with it.

The people of the Depressed Classes, however, were outside political life, and were not enthusiastic participants in the national liberation movement. The reasons are not far to seek. From times immemorial they had been in a state of social and economic bondage to the caste Hindus. The Guntur district Magistrate wrote in 1932: "the depressed classes, generally may be considered to have no ideas in the matter..... these are generally so much under monetary or other obligations to other classes that their opposition to the Civil Disobedience Movement is more dormant than active".¹

The women of the district extended their hand of cooperation to their men, though not wholly or massively, but substantially and impressively. The Bezawada All India Congress Committee meeting on March 31 and April 1, 1921 and Ganchi's tour of the Guntur district immediately after it marked the entry of the women of the district into the national movement. They came forward to liberally contribute towards Tilak

1. Guntur District Magistrate to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, dated May 3, 1932.
(A.P. State Archives, H.F.S. Section)

Swaraj Fund. There were incidents, when women parted with all their jewellery for the national cause. During the non-cooperation days the women picketed before shops dealing in foreign goods, especially cloth. Unnava Lakshmibayamma, Yamini Purna Tilakam and Bharathi Devi Ranga led batches of women and made boycott programme a success. The massive evacuation of the population of Chirala-Perala - during Chirala-Perala Satyagraha against the imposition of a municipality might not have been possible but for the willing cooperation of the women. It was during this movement that Ravula Alamelu Mangamma, an elderly lady, courted imprisonment for refusing to pay municipal taxes. She was probably one of the first women to go to jail in the Andhra Districts for political offences. In the Pedanandipadu and Cuddukur no-tax campaign the women were active in the social boycott of the government officials. *During the Palnad Forest Satyagraha the women developed intrepidity and in the full presence of mounted police and machine-gun toting tommies they rescued their cattle from the pounds.* In the subsequent movements also the women of the Guntur district were active. They ran Sibirams, braved lathi charges, suffered every indignity at the hands of the police, and courted long terms of imprisonment for the national cause.

A NON-VIOLENT MOVEMENT WEDDED TO GANDHIAN IDEALS

A salient feature with regards to the freedom movement in the district was communal harmony between the Hindus and the Muslims. At the height of communal frenzy in many parts of the country, the District Magistrate, Guntur, reported that "there were no clashes between the Hindus and the Muslims" in the district.¹

¹ S. M. Hussain, District Magistrate, Guntur to the Registrar, High Court of the Judicature Madras dated December 19, 1945, (A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section)

Yet another salient feature of the freedom movement in the Guntur district was absence of violence on the part of freedom fighters after Gandhi had taken over reins of the national movement. During the worst periods of repression the people's confidence in the Gandhian techniques of satyagraha were not shaken. They braved lathi charges, frequent promulgation of Section 144 Cr. P. C., whole-sale arrests, police searches and the like, but never even once did they swerve from the path of non-violence. Chauri Chaura type of incidents were not enacted in the district.

The August revolt of 1942, however, was an exception. But in this case the government was much to blame for the incidents. All leaders - national, provincial, district and taluq - were jailed, and there was no responsible person to guide the people. So every person proved a leader unto himself, and the mobs in a frenzy of fury resorted to the destruction of railway stations, government offices and other symbols of British authority. The mobs in Tenali on August 12, 1942 in a state of high excitement destroyed all that came in their way. But they had the nobility to conduct a White passenger to a place of safety in the railway station. Further "..... whosoever did anything in this movement, although not always in conformity with the strictest code of non-violence, did it in a mood of uncontrollable excitement and not out of my intention of knowingly disobeying the leadership".¹

There were bomb blasts - three in Guntur and one in Ongole - during the Quit India Movement. Even according to the government version there was no loss either

1. S. K. Patil: The Indian National Congress - A case for its Reorganisation (Aundh, 1945), p. 18.

to life or to property. ¹ These incidents were only an exception, not a rule. The bomb-cult did not evoke response in the district.

1. Khan Saheb Md. Abdul Aziz Saheb Bahadur, District Magistrate, Guntur to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras Public (General) Department, Madras dated May 29, 1943

Re. 1150-Conf-17c

A. P. State Archives, H. F. S. Section:

GLOSSARY

(In the text all Indian words are italicised, when they occur for the first time.)

Abkari	: Cess
Adhyakshopanyasamu	: Presidential Address
Ahims	: Non-violence
Andhra Keaari	: Lion of Andhra
Andhra Ratna	: Diamond of Andhra
Anna	: One sixteenth of a Rupee. After the introduction of the metric system annas were withdrawn from circulation.
Badmash	: Bad character
Bahadurism	: Bossism
Bhandagaram	: Repository
Brahmin	: From the Later Vedic times the Hindu society came to be divided into four castes - Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vysya and Sudra - based on the division of labour. The Brahmin occupied the highest stratum in the Hindu society.
Bundies	: Carts
Charitra	: History
Charka	: Spinning Wheel
Chatuvulu	: Stray verses
Dandu	: Brigade
Dappulu	: Country drums
Desa	: Country
Desabhakta	: Patriot
Desatyag	: Voluntary exile
Doratanamu	: Rule
Durantamu	: Atrocity
Fasli	: Harvest year

Firka	: Administrative unit of a taluq mainly for revenue purposes.
Ghee	: Clarified butter
Grama	: Village
Grandhalayamu	: Library
Grandhamu	: Book
Hakim	: Physician
Harijans	: People of the depressed classes. The term is coined by Gandhi.
Hartal	: Closure of all business-houses, educational and other institutions as a mark of protest
Hizrat	: The flight of Mohammad from Mecca; any flight.
Jai	: Victory
Janmabhumi	: Motherland
Jatheeya	: National
Kalasala	: College
Kammas	: The high caste sudras, tillers of the soil.
Karanam }	: Village Officer in-charge of village records
Karnam }	
Karyadarsi	: Secretary
Kesari	: Lion
Khaddar }	: Hand spun cloth
Khadi }	
Khilafat }	: It was the post-world War I movement to protect the interests of Khalifa, the Sultan of Turkey.
Khilaphat }	
Kisan	: Peasant
Kist	: Collection of Land revenue.
Lathi	: A heavy stick used by the police to disperse crowds.
Lakshmi	: Hindu Goddess of wealth & prosperity

Mahammari	: Plague
Mahasivaratri	: Birthday of Lord Siva, one of the Hindu Trinity.
Mahatma	: Great Soul
Maidan	: Plain
Malapalli	: Residential area of the Harijans in a village
Mandala	: District
Mandiram	: Temple
Mangala Sutra	: Sacred thread which a Hindu woman wears after marriage.
Mantram	: Hymn
Maulana	: A learned Muslim
Mohatad	: A village servant who assists the Village Officers
Moturpha	: A cess on trade
Munsiff	: Village Officer in-charge of law and order. He also collects land revenue.
Mutt	: Monastery
Nataka	: Dramatic
Nidhi	: Fund
Nivedika	: Report
Palakeen	: Palanquin
Palanam	: Rule.
Panchala	: Punjab
Panchamas	: People of the depressed classes.
Panchayat	: A village administrative unit or a council of village elders to decide petty cases.
Panthulu	: A respectable term for a Brahmin, especially a Neogi. Neogis are secular Brahmins.
Parabhavam	: Humiliation
Parishad	: Council
Parnasalas	: Thatched huts
Pathasala	: School

Pattana	: Town or pertaining to a town
Patrika	: Newspaper
Poramboke	: Waste-land
Prabhat Dheri	: Drum beating in the early hours to denote dawn.
Prabhavam	: Influence
Pradhana	: Main
Pradesh	: Province
Pullari	: Grazing tax
Pustaka	: Book
Puranas	: Epics
Radhamu	: Chariot
Raj	: Rule
Raja	: King. In the Telugu country the word 'Raja' became synonymous with 'Zamindar'
Rajus	: A section of the Kshatriya caste, a caste devoted to the defence of the country.
Rakshasa	: Demon
Reddy	: High caste Sudras, tillers of the soil.
Rupees	: The standard Indian coin
Ryo?	: Peasant
Sabha	: Assembly
Sahityam	: Literature
Saka	: Era
Samajamu	: Society
Sanchika	: Edition or issue
Santi Sena	: Peace Brigade
Sangham	: Association
Satabda	: Century
Sarvaswamu	: Encyclopaedia
Satyagraha	: Civil resistance
Satyagrahi	: One who practises satyagraha
Sevak Sangham	: Social Service organisation
Shastipurthi	: Completion of sixty years in a man's life. It is a day of celebration

Sibiram	:	सिरीराम
Smruthulu	:	स्मृतिभू
Sopanamu	:	सोपानम्
Suddhi	:	पूरिफिकेशन
Swadeshi	:	Belonging to one's own country
Swaraj	}	: Self-rule
Swarajya		
Sweeya Charitra	:	Autobiography
Tahsildar	:	A taluk officer-in-charge of the collection of land revenue. He also acts as a Taluk Magistrate.
Taluk	}	: Administrative division of a district mainly for the revenue purposes.
Talug		
Telugu	:	Mother tongue of Andhra Pradesh
Tidhi	:	Date in the Hindu Calendar
Tom-toming	:	Beating the drum to attract the attention of the people before a government notification or order is announced. Even today information is carried to the people in the villages by tom-toming.
Triveni	:	Confluence of three rivers.
Udyamamu	:	Movement
Vakil	:	Indian attorney
Vande Mataram	:	Salutation to thee Oh, Motherland
Velamas	:	High caste Sudras
Vetti	:	A village servant who assists the karanam and the Munsiff
Vicharana	:	Enquiry
Vidyalaya	:	Educational institution
Vidya	:	Education

Vijayamu	: Victory
Viplava	: Revolutionary
Vivaha Vidhi	: Conventions of the institution of marriage
Vratam	: Religious ceremony
Vysya	: The third caste in the Hindu religion. The main profession of the Vysya is business.
Yatra	: Journey
Zamindar	: A land-lord who pays land revenue direct to the government.
Zilla	: District
Zutka	: Horse-driven coach.

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The papers are neither classified nor paged. They are now in the possession of N. V. L. Narasimharao, Kottapet, Guntur (Andhra Pradesh)

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